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The Atlantic Monthly

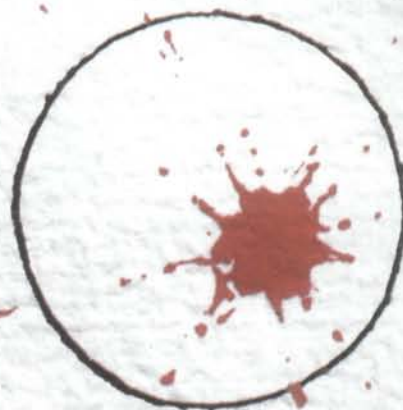
FEBRUARY 2000

THE HOLOCAUST ON TRIAL

In a
libel suit
in Great
Britain a
writer with
disturbing
views makes
historical
truth the
defendant

by
D. D. Guttenplan

Pivert



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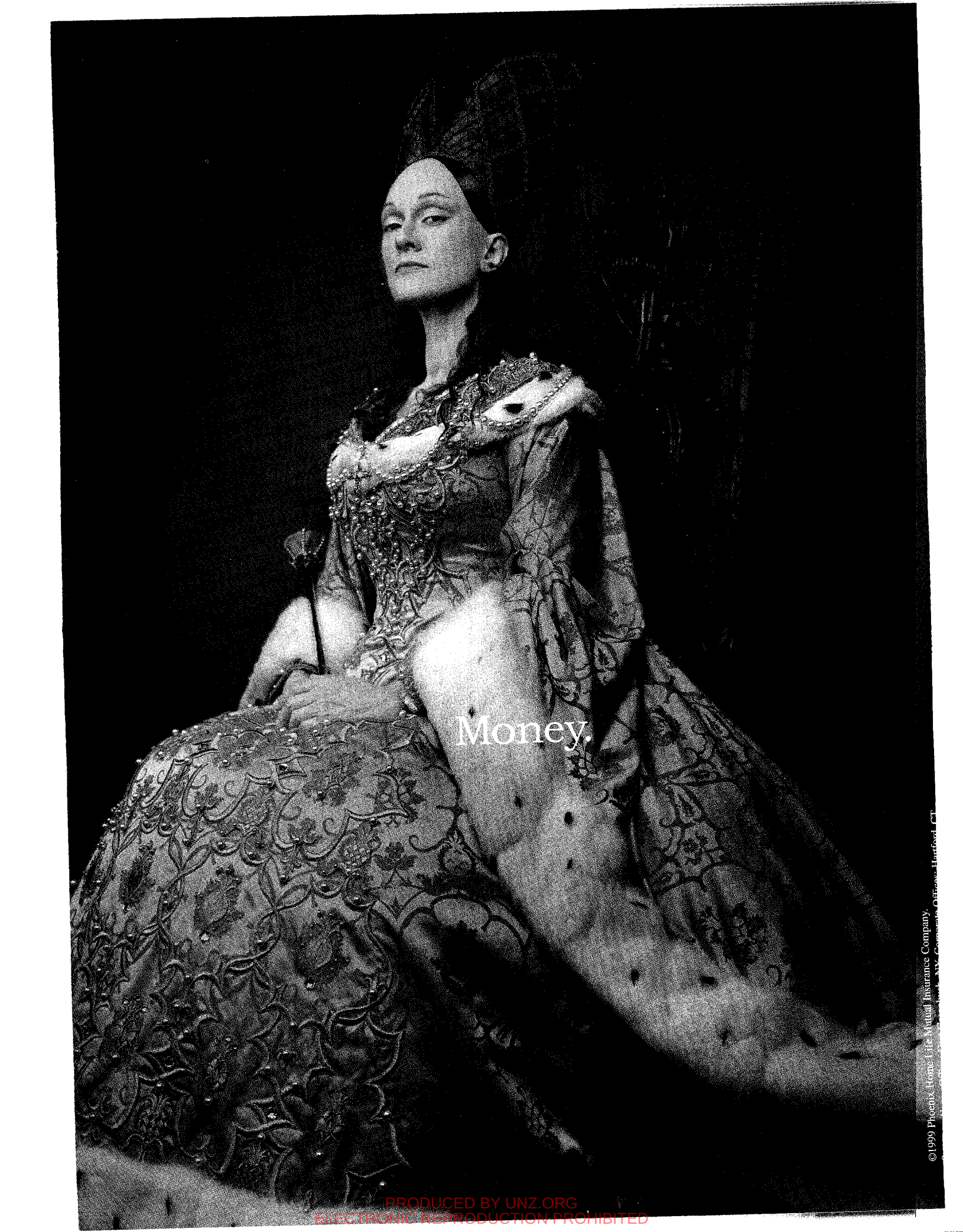
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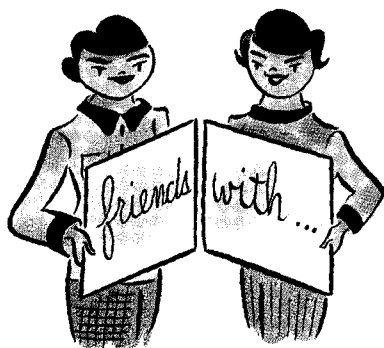
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In Courtroom 37 of the Royal Courts of Justice, in London, a judge of the Queen's Bench is presiding over the matter of *David Irving v. Penguin Books Ltd. and Deborah Lipstadt*. Lipstadt has called Irving "one of the most dangerous spokespersons for Holocaust denial." Irving, who speaks of the Holocaust as "an ill-fitting legend," is suing Lipstadt on grounds of libel. "In effect," the author writes, "he is seeking to put not just Lipstadt but the Holocaust itself on trial—an effort in which he will receive considerable help from British libel law."

by D. D. Guttenplan

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No one disputes that during the 1950s and early 1960s nearly a hundred million Americans received polio vaccine contaminated with a monkey virus known as SV40. Recently the virus has been associated with some forms of human cancer. Is SV40 a causative factor in these cancers? Is there reason to suspect the vaccine?

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77 NORTH WASHINGTON STREET

"FOR me," says D. D. Guttenplan, the author of this month's cover story, "The Holocaust on Trial," about the libel suit brought by the British writer David Irving against the American historian Deborah Lipstadt, "writing is a way of finding out what I think. So when I heard about the David Irving case, I was immediately intrigued. I had written several articles on the McLibel trial—when McDonald's tried to use the British libel laws to silence its critics—and knew how much any libel defense in England is an uphill battle. Still, Anthony Julius, the counsel for the defense, is no ordinary lawyer. If Irving lost, his credibility would be destroyed. But if he won, he would be able to say that a British court found his version of history—in which Nazi gas chambers are a figment of Allied propaganda—to be correct. And although the court would hear a great many facts, the central questions of the Irving case would be about historical knowledge, about how we come to know and what we come to believe."

Guttenplan is an American writer who since 1994 has been living and reporting in London. His career has been a varied one—he has worked for a book publisher (Pantheon), a literary magazine (*Granta*), a newsmagazine (*Newsweek*), a glossy

magazine (*Vanity Fair*), and two New York City newspapers (*The Village Voice* and *New York Newsday*). He is currently a contributing editor of *The Nation*. Guttenplan intends to continue covering the Irving trial, which may last as long as three months, and is thinking about writing a book on the subject. Meanwhile, he has for several years been researching a book

about the life and times of the maverick journalist I. F. Stone.

Stone often went against the conventional wisdom. "The establishment reporters," he once said, "know a lot of things I don't know. But a lot of what they know isn't true, and a lot of what they know that is true, they can't print." At the time of Stone's death, in 1989, Guttenplan was working for *New York News-*

day—writing a column on the New York media and covering national and local politics. He resigned in 1991 in order to work on his study of Stone. "I had a nagging sense of too many stories and not enough time—of never being sure I knew what I was talking about. Stone's life seemed to me a chance to write honestly about some of the more contested episodes in the country's past—to connect the dots of twentieth-century American history in a new way." —THE EDITORS



NICHOLAS EIDER

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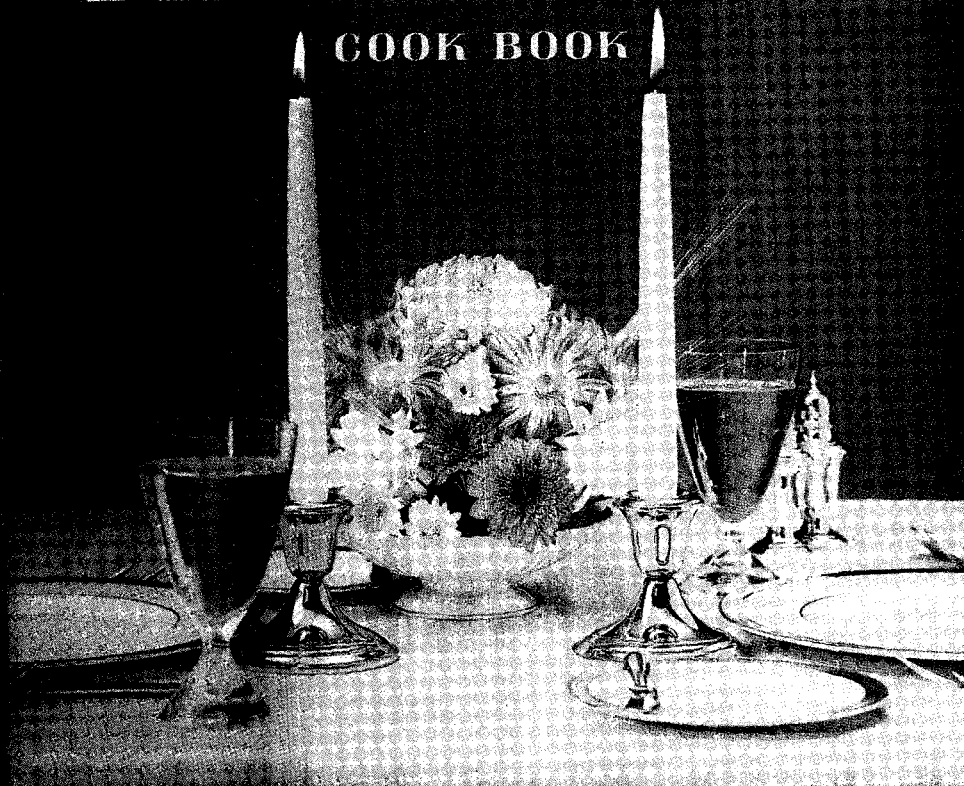
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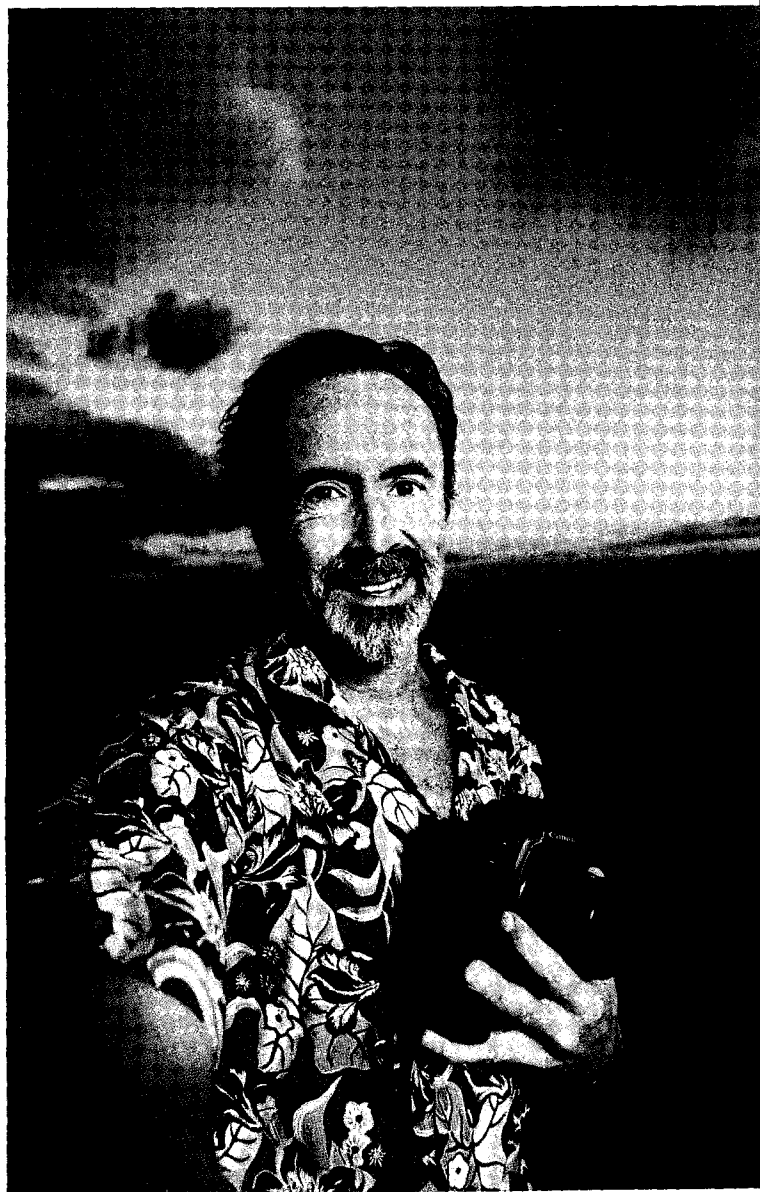
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– Walter Ioss Jr., professional sports photographer

(self portrait)



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–Austin Eckardt, avid surfer, amateur photographer



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LETTERS

The Cost of Fame

I was interested in Sue Erikson Bloland's discussion of the illusions created around fame ("Fame: The Power and Cost of a Fantasy," November *Atlantic*). I felt, however, that her deconstruction of her father's intellectual passions into his longing for his lost parents and fear of his own emotion and intimacy with his daughter undermined the strength and potential development of Bloland's argument.

The truth is that the majority of children, and therefore adults, suffer from neglectful parents, fear of intimacy, and a desperate need to be noticed, and sometimes one of these people is an Erik Erikson, a Charlie Chaplin, or a Laurence Olivier. But that is rare, and does not establish a link between internal conflict and emergence as an artist or an intellectual. Although childhood trauma and a need for validation can be used to fuel creativity or achievement, they don't "explain" artistic passion.

Michele Beck
New York, N.Y.

Jack R. Anderson
Lincoln, Nebr.

Sue Erikson Bloland's interesting article reminded me of a dinner party in 1956 at a restaurant in Heidelberg, Germany, at which Erik Erikson was the guest of honor. The party was hosted by Alexander Mitscherlich, an eminent German psychoanalyst who directed the University of Heidelberg's Psychosomatic Clinic. The occasion was the celebration of the hundredth anniversary of Freud's birth. The food was served in a garden lit by colored lanterns; the wine flowed freely.

Erikson's personality was scintillating and his talk stimulating. In the after-dinner discussion, which went on for hours, a topic for friendly disagreement was psychic determinism. The card-carrying Freudians insisted that free will is a delusion and that all our feelings, thoughts, and actions are determined by reciprocally urging and checking forces beyond our awareness and control. The existentially oriented analysts argued for freedom of choice and the consequent awesome responsibility of

each individual to choose the right feelings, thoughts, and actions. Although we argued loud and long, we arrived at no consensus, which is not surprising given that the debate continues to this day.

Bloland apparently belongs to the psychic-determinism school of thought: she explains her father's perceived emotional inadequacies and her own neurotic feelings of shame as the ineluctable effects of defective or inept parenting. To the contrary, some philosophers—for example, Robert Kane, at the University of Texas—still champion the cause of free will and personal responsibility. Kane argues quite persuasively that although antecedent events may incline us toward certain feelings, thoughts, and actions, they do not determine our choices, which remain free.

I am nonetheless forever beholden to Bloland for reviving the memory of that delightful Heidelberg evening forty-three years ago in the company of her gifted father.

I played directly into the idealizing trap described by Sue Erikson Bloland during a brief opportunity I had to observe her celebrated parents spending a semester in residence at the college I attended in the 1980s. I vividly remember the white-haired figures of intellectual royalty making infrequent dining-hall entrances to the awe of whispering undergrads, myself included.

Bloland deftly punctures her father's Nobel pretensions while leaving the dignity of his Pulitzer achievement intact. She reminds us that the inevitable process of idealization expands its object by diminishing its subject, often with merciless consequences. Bloland redresses this imbalance with a democratically empowering model of psycho-cultural health. One imagines that in a more centered, nurturing, and transparent milieu the articulation of such a clear and healing vision would have made her father proud.

Aaron Edison
New York, N.Y.



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Capital Punishment

Thank you for Alan Berlow's excellent article about the flaws of capital punishment ("The Wrong Man," November *Atlantic*). As an attorney and an activist against the death penalty, I was alarmed to read that Paul G. Cassell, a professor of law at the University of Utah, dismisses the likelihood that innocent people have been executed by saying "There is no documented case of a factually innocent person who has been executed for at least the last fifty years." As a law professor, Cassell knows that there is no such legal standard as "factual innocence" in criminal matters, any more than there is a legal requirement that defendants be proved factually guilty. The question we should be asking when people are put to death despite strong evidence of innocence is whether the prosecutor's case could have been proved "beyond a reasonable doubt" had all the relevant evidence been presented at the time of trial. In an increasing number of cases we simply cannot answer "yes" with any confidence.

Two cases especially come to mind as examples of the execution of men for acts they probably did not commit. In 1995 the State of Texas executed Jesse Jacobs even though prosecutors no longer believed that he had committed the killing for which he was condemned. Jacobs had participated in an abduction during which a woman was killed, but had consistently proclaimed his innocence of the actual killing. After securing his death sentence, prosecutors ultimately agreed with him. They convicted another person of the crime, but allowed Jacobs's execution to go forward. In 1990 the State of Florida executed Jesse Tafero owing largely to the testimony of his companion at the scene of a double homicide, who was a convicted felon. Tafero's common-law wife, Sonia Jacobs, was also present at the scene, and was convicted on the basis of similar testimony. Two years after Tafero's execution Sonia Jacobs's conviction was overturned, because prosecutors had withheld crucial exculpatory evidence, including the companion's jailhouse boast that he had sent two innocent people to death row and forensic evidence demonstrating that only the companion's hands showed any signs of having fired a gun.

In these cases and many others like them it is doubtful that prosecutors could have proved their cases for capital punishment "beyond a reasonable doubt" with a full and accurate presentation of evidence.

No doubt this knowledge led them to manipulate or withhold evidence in the first place. For Cassell to claim that no mistakes have been made because there is no proof by his fictional standard of "factual innocence" is chillingly disingenuous.

Cassell also overlooks an important reason why we should be concerned about condemning "the wrong man"—it ensures that the truly guilty will go free.

Barbara Hood

Alaskans Against the Death Penalty
Anchorage, Alaska

The wrong men are imprisoned for so many serious crimes because once a suspect is apprehended, the police and prosecutors operate under a presumption of guilt. At a fairly early stage in the criminal-justice process they stop re-examining their case and focus instead on proving and winning it. The defense attorney, who is charged with raising any argument that might possibly work, is regarded as an impediment to obtaining a conviction. The judge is charged with determining which arguments the jury will be allowed to hear. The jury, receiving only the information it is allowed to know, is supposed to guess at the truth. No one before the jurors has that responsibility.

When it functions correctly, the adversarial system may be the best protection against rampant abuse, but it is not the best means of discerning truth. What is needed is some way of re-examining a case before everyone is committed to his or her role in the game. If someone can figure out a way to do this so that the police don't perceive the re-examiner as "anti-cop," then the problem will be solved (more or less).

William Baker

Santa Barbara, Calif.

Information Revolution

I am writing about "Beyond the Information Revolution," by Peter Drucker (October *Atlantic*). Drucker's comparative analysis of the Industrial and Information Revolutions was insightful, but his focus on e-commerce and neglect of the impact that the Information Revolution will have on social phenomena was disappointing. Around the turn of the century Durkheim, Tönnies, and Weber all wrote about the sweeping social transformations that accompanied the Industrial Revolution. Sim-

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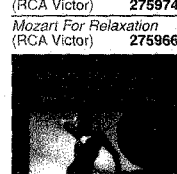
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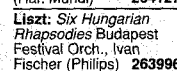
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ilarly, Drucker noted the impact that the Industrial Revolution had on social phenomena (e.g., families and the class system), but failed to address like effects of the Information Revolution.

For example, the relationships made possible by e-mail and online chat rooms are neglected by Drucker, as are potential changes in familial structure. Will “knowledge workers” have to relocate every few years (dragging spouse and children along) as today’s corporate workers do, or will they be able to remain in one area and develop community ties? What about existing concepts of community and personal relationships? Will online chat rooms develop into online support groups? Is a virtual community possible? Will johndoe@whatever.com be considered a personal friend?

Then there are the effects the Information Revolution may have on education. Will the resources available on the Internet fuel the growth of home schooling? Will high schools start offering online classes? How about religion? Can a priest receive confessions by e-mail? Can a congregation exist online? What impact will the Information Revolution have on the existing class system? Will members of the lower socioeconomic tiers (who often depend on unskilled jobs to scrape out a living) be better or worse off?

Ben Brown
Brownsville, Texas

In his comparison of e-commerce with the Industrial Revolution, Peter Drucker glosses over the tremendous social instability unleashed by industrialization. Although the Industrial Age’s technological advances enhanced productivity, technology also fostered obscene social inequalities—inequalities that led to the growth of political instability, the rise of unions, and the advent of communism.

Similarly, if e-commerce is as revolutionary as Drucker claims, social dislocations will follow. At a minimum, the income gap between rich and poor will widen as low-skilled individuals find themselves unable to survive in an information-based economy. At least the poor of the Industrial Age could use their physical labor to perform factory work. What jobs will be open to the modern poor who lack the skills to manipulate information? If these people can’t earn a living, what forms of social unrest will be loosed upon society?

John Quinterno Jr.
Rockville Centre, N.Y.

Peter Drucker replies:

Ben Brown and John Quinterno are absolutely right: the social and political (and psychological) consequences of the Information Revolution will greatly outweigh its economic and technological consequences. But anyone who tries to predict these consequences will surely be dead wrong. Not one of the predicted social and political effects of the Industrial Revolution (or, 250 years earlier, of the printing revolution) came true. The most illustrious example is that of the greatest philosopher of the modern age, Immanuel Kant. Analyzing the Industrial Revolution, Kant predicted with absolutely irrefutable logic that it would usher in eternal peace (in his little book *Zum ewigen Frieden*, which appeared in 1795, at the outset of the Napoleonic Wars). Fifty years later Karl Marx was just as wrong—and yet Marx was (and still is) the most brilliant analyst and historian of the Industrial Revolution, then already fifty years old. It is reasonably certain that any predictions now made about the social, political, and psychological effects of the Information Revolution will be equally far off the mark.

Advice & Consent

I am in full agreement with the use that Alan Wolfe made of the evidence contained in my book *The Fateful Hoaxing of Margaret Mead: A Historical Analysis of Her Samoan Research* (1999) in his article “The Mystique of Betty Freidan” (September *Atlantic*). I would, however, like your readers to know that I am not, as Alan Wolfe mistakenly states, an advocate of sociobiological determinism. This is a doctrine of which I have always been an outspoken opponent, as, for example, in my paper in *Sociobiology Examined* (1980).

Derek Freeman
Emeritus Professor of Anthropology
The Australian National University

The *Atlantic Monthly* ought to explain to its readers that the photograph of Eugenio Pacelli illustrating the review of John Cornwell’s *Hitler’s Pope* (“The Holocaust and the Catholic Church,” by James Carroll, October *Atlantic*) was taken in 1927, just after Pacelli had presented his diplomatic credentials to President Hindenburg. From the tone of James Carroll’s review and the title of Cornwell’s book, the nonperceptive reader (notice the

absence of swastika armbands on the soldiers of the Wehrmacht flanking Pacelli in the photograph) might assume that Pacelli traveled to Berlin to call on Hitler after his election as Pope Pius XII, in 1939.

Carroll’s review fails to mention that after the 1933 concordat with the German state, the reigning Pope, Pius XI, issued an encyclical in German condemning Nazism, “*Mit brennender Sorge*” (1937). Although Carroll is correct that this concordat was signed with the understanding that the Catholic Center Party would disband itself, he is incorrect in his assertion that the Catholic Church then acquiesced in the face of Hitler’s evil (as documented by the above-mentioned encyclical).

Rafael E. Tarragó
Minneapolis, Minn.

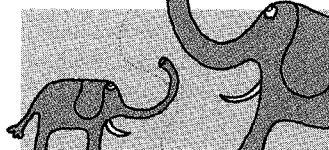
I was amused by the recent discussion in your pages (Word Court, November *Atlantic*) concerning whether the terms “male” and “female”—in the context of electrical plugs and other interfaces—are politically incorrect or otherwise offensive. This persnickety debate has existed far longer than you may realize, and has even reached outer space. In the 1970s, when NASA spacecraft performed docking maneuvers in orbit, the *Apollo* and *Saturn* modules consummated their couplings with the aid of a very large (but quite simple) male plug and female socket. The Soviet space agency of that same period equipped its *Soyuz* vessels with a male-female interlink almost identical to NASA’s. However, for the linkup between *Apollo* 18 and *Soyuz* 19, in July of 1975, U.S. and Soviet aerospace engineers designed an incredibly complex (and inefficient) set of docking clamps that bore no resemblance to the genitals of any known sex. This was necessary for one reason only: on that historic “first date” between the two rival space agencies, neither participant was willing to take the “female” role, which would require its spaceship to be penetrated by the other nation’s “male” hardware.

F. Gwynplaine MacIntyre
New York, N.Y.

Editors’ Note

Much of the research for “The Health-Care Economy Is Nothing to Fear,” by Charles R. Morris (December *Atlantic*), was underwritten by the Century Foundation, as part of its ongoing review of senior entitlement programs.

THE FEBRUARY ALMANAC



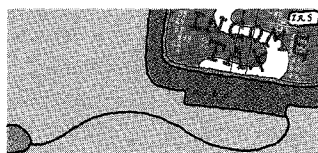
Environment

This month South Africa and Botswana are expected to officially open Africa's first "transfrontier conservation area"—Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park, which covers some 14,000 square miles of land in the two countries. A second African transfrontier conservation area, to include land from Mozambique, Zimbabwe, and South Africa, is due to open within the next few years. Biologists hope that the parks will enable wildlife to re-establish migration paths long disrupted by borders, a process that could in turn lead to healthier populations. They also hope that the parks will help to balance the distribution of particular species: some areas contain very few elephants, for example, while others have so many that herds must be culled. Such areas have a long history in the rest of the world; the first, linking land in the United States and Canada, opened in 1932. There are now about a hundred in all. They usually result from the efforts of private groups; in Africa an international organization called the Peace Parks Foundations was one of the main catalysts.

Health & Safety

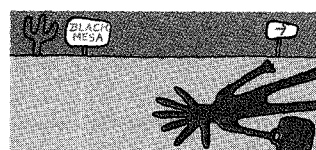
February sees some of the lowest temperatures of the year—a fact especially pertinent to those prone to hypertension or cardiovascular disease. Recent studies have shown that cold weather elevates blood pressure, possibly because it constricts the blood vessels. High blood pressure in a cold environment can have several adverse effects: it may increase ven-

tricular-wall stress, raise demands on the heart, increase the blood's oxygen requirements, and impair the flow of blood to the heart. The constriction of the arteries that occurs in cold weather may also cause pulmonary edema, an accumulation of fluid in the lungs. And blood viscosity increases, thereby interfering with the supply of blood oxygen to the heart and raising the likelihood of clots. Taken together, these phenomena can have considerable significance. For example, a recent study in the *British Medical Journal* noted that the number of cardiovascular-disease-related deaths in Scotland and New Zealand was 30 percent higher in cold months than in warm ones.



Demographics

Accountants will be busy this month, as the rush to file income-tax forms begins (the deadline for employers to send tax statements to their employees is January 31). Contrary to popular belief, most people do not file at the last minute: the Internal Revenue Service typically receives more than half the year's returns before April 1. February's filers tend to be those expecting refunds (chiefly retirees and low-income earners) and those able to use simple forms. Taxpayers intent on getting their refunds quickly might consider ditching paper forms: those who file electronically get refunds about twice as fast as those who file on paper. Direct deposit further expedites the process, and has another virtue as well: it circumvents refund problems that can be caused by illegible handwriting or changes of address. Last November the IRS mounted a search for about 100,000 taxpayers whose refund checks from 1998 were undeliverable.



Government

February 1: Today those Navajo living on Black Mesa, in Arizona, who have not ceded their land to the Hopi may be evicted by the federal government. The territorial issues involved date back to 1882, when a Hopi reserve was created on land occupied by the Navajo. The two tribes co-existed peacefully until coal was discovered on Black Mesa. In 1974 Congress ordered the area partitioned between the tribes, presumably to facilitate coal leases, and a large-scale relocation began. Some Navajo in the new Hopi area refused to leave. Legislation passed in 1996 requires them to sign their land over to the Hopi tribe; in return they can stay on it, as renters, for 75 years. As of this writing 88 Navajo families are holding out. Also this month a number of states hold primaries: both parties in New Hampshire on the 1st, Republicans in Delaware on the 8th, South Carolina on the 19th, Arizona and Michigan on the 22nd, and Virginia and North Dakota (caucus) on the 29th.

The Skies

February 2: The waning crescent Moon and Venus together skim the southeast horizon before dawn. **8:** The waxing Moon lies close to Mars tonight. It passes just below Jupiter on the 10th and Saturn on the 11th. **13:** The Moon passes near the bright star Aldebaran tonight. **19:** Full Moon, also known this month as the Snow, Trapper's, or Hunger Moon. **29:** Leap Day, notable for being the first in a centennial year since 1600.



Arts & Letters

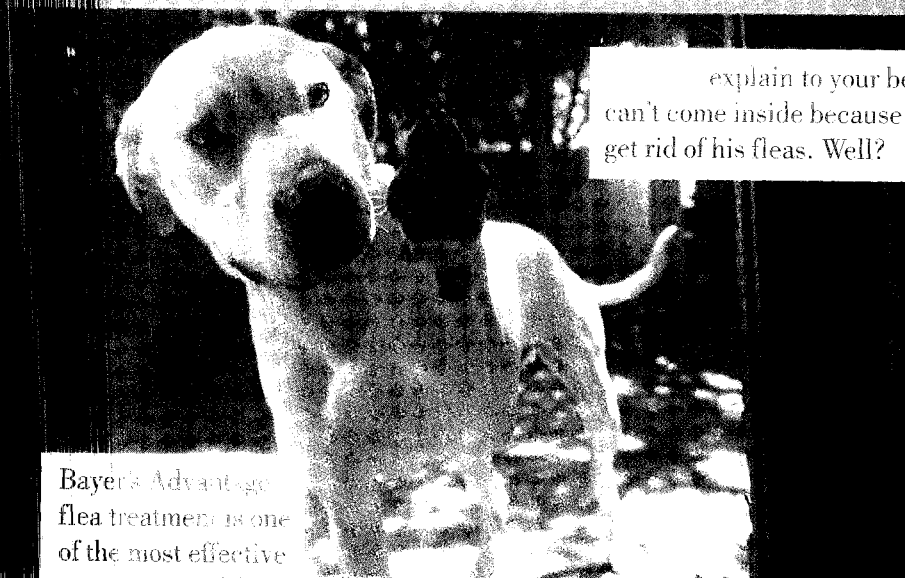
This month two friends who chronicled rural poverty for President Franklin D. Roosevelt's Farm Security Administration will be honored with exhibits. On February 1 New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art will present the first comprehensive retrospective of the work of the photographer Walker Evans. The show will consist of 175 prints spanning his career. It closes in New York in May, and will travel to San Francisco and Houston. On February 5 more than 150 photographs, drawings, and mural studies by the Lithuanian émigré Ben Shahn go on display at Harvard University's Arthur M. Sackler Museum. The exhibit will focus on Shahn's depictions of Depression-era New York. It will remain in Cambridge through April and will continue on to Washington, New York, and Chicago.



100 Years Ago

Ethel Dench Puffer, writing in the February, 1900, issue of *The Atlantic Monthly*: "The popular interest in scientific truth has always had its hidden spring in a desire for the marvelous. The search for the philosopher's stone has done as much for chemistry as the legend of the elixir of life for exploration and geographical discovery. From the excitements of these suggestions of the occult, the world settled down into a reasonable understanding of the facts of which they were but the enlarged and grotesque shadows. . . . Too often . . . we fail to trace in the dull presentment of every-day experience a likeness to the wonders we pursue, forgetting that marvels have meaning and value only in so far as they can establish their kinship with the events of daily life, and thus fall at last into the great sweep of universal law."





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Nominal Authority

"So out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name."—Genesis 2:19

THE year just past may be remembered as anticlimactic from a millennial perspective, but it was an epochal year in the history of names. I am not referring to the decision last summer by Binney & Smith to replace the name indian red with the name chestnut on its reddish-brown Crayola crayon, although that decision was certainly noteworthy. The company acted after receiving complaints from people who believed that the word "indian" was a reference to Native American skin color. (It is actually a reference to a pigment found in India.) This was not the first time Crayola crayons had encountered name problems. In 1962 Binney & Smith gave the name peach to the crayon formerly known as flesh. A few years earlier it had given the name midnight blue to the crayon formerly known as prussian blue, on the grounds that no one knew any longer what Prussia was. I won't be surprised if some of the crayons still found in Crayola's 120-color pack run into opposition. Two bear the names of endangered species (manatee, timberwolf). Another (atomic tangerine) seems to scoff at public concern over food irradiation.

The truly big news in 1999 involving names was the breakup of the monopoly on the assignment of domain names on the Internet. As is widely known, a company called Network Solutions enjoyed the lucrative right to approve and register all Internet addresses ending with the suffixes ".com," ".net," and ".org." Network Solutions received a \$35 annual fee from each registrant. A new oversight board has now extended the right of registration to many more companies. In 1992 only about 7,000 registered domain names existed. Now there are more than six million, and the number is growing by 70,000 a week.

No one is quite sure of the implications. Entrepreneurs known

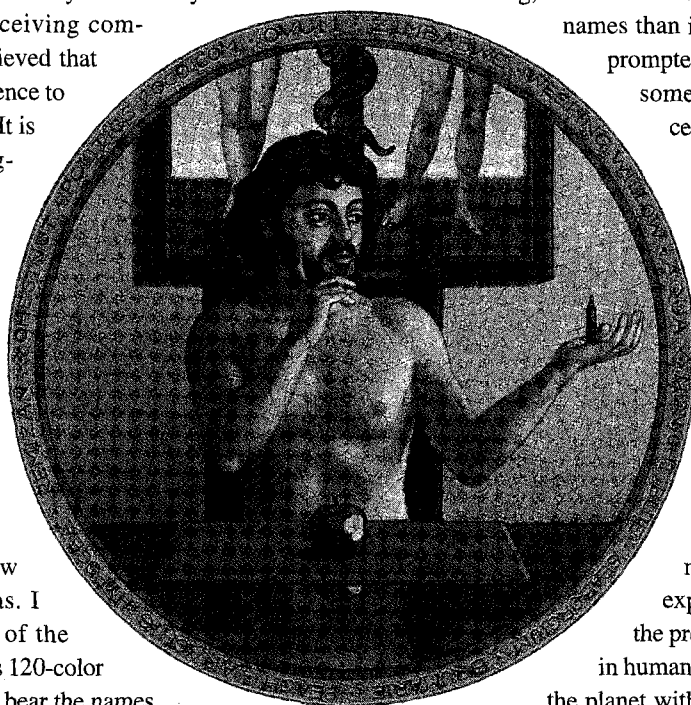
as cybersquatters have eagerly bought up domain names that they hope eventually to sell for large sums—generic names like drugs.com and porno.com, but also names of companies and people. In the first half of 1999, according to a tally made by Enterprise IG, a company that specializes in "identity consulting," more American corporations changed their

names than in any other six-month period, prompted in part by an urge to acquire some Internet cachet. One thing is certain: we are in the midst of the largest outbreak of new names in history.

• • •

The early chapters of the Book of Genesis amount to a catalogue of arrangements that didn't quite work out (sinlessness, immortality, painless childbirth, the zero-hour work week). But one reality that survives unaltered from the moment of creation through the expulsion from Eden and on up to the present day is the authority vested in human beings to endow everything on the planet with a name: "branding," it would now be called. Another reality that remains unaltered is the existence of two sexes. Perhaps in his great anger the Lord left these things alone, on the assumption that they would cause trouble enough exactly the way they were.

Laden with emotion and symbolism, names get ensnared in everything. Directors at Canada's Central Experimental Farm recently caused an outcry when they banned the use of human names for cows. (They feared that a child named Elsie, say, would be embarrassed to meet a cow with the same name.) One way to monitor the amount of turmoil on the planet over time is simply to chart the number of name changes in the indexes of successive editions of *The Times Atlas of the World*. Ideology, nationalism, and geopolitics dictate continual revision. The first edition of the atlas published after the end of the Cold War



by Cullen Murphy

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contained new names for 10,000 locales. The world, of course, does not go along with every suggestion. Few people acceded to Kampuchea as a new name for Cambodia, and I have yet to notice much support for Mumbai, even though it happens to be the official name of Bombay. But most people eventually agreed to replace Rhodesia with Zimbabwe and Burma with Myanmar. The change from Peking to Beijing meant accepting a whole new system of transliteration, and therefore a new name for every place in China, which we all somehow managed to swallow.

Today there are more names than ever before, and yet there can never be enough. Things keep coming to light that never had any name at all. Experiments with nuclear accelerators during the past two decades have produced several previously unknown elements. Deciding which names to give the elements numbered 104 through 109 on the periodic table has generated fierce disputes. The discoverers of No. 106, at California's Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory, wanted to name it seaborgium, after the Nobel laureate Glenn T. Seaborg, the laboratory's onetime director—only to be overruled by an international tribunal, which favored a New Zealander. The issue of elemental nomenclature was settled (and seaborgium accepted) in 1997, after years of bargaining.

There is a huge backlog when it comes to the names of species. The Book of Genesis indicates that Adam, the first identity consultant, gave names to "all cattle, and to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field," but it says nothing about, for instance, beetles. A Smithsonian researcher estimates that some 30 million faunal species, mostly insects, haven't even been discovered yet. Many of the ones we know about still haven't been named. More than a thousand species of beetles in the single genus *Agra* are waiting for designations. And let's not even get into stars and galaxies.

Given the growth in demand along a broad front, it is hardly surprising that some places are experiencing severe name shortages. A combination of relatively few traditional surnames and relatively few popular first names has given Denmark a higher concentration of people with identical names than any other European country. The government there has instituted an emergency program to encourage people to change their surnames legally, to almost anything at all. (There are limits: the Danish words for "dolphin" and "wheat beer" have been permitted; those for "Sputnik" and "Antichrist" have not.) The expansion of American suburbs has caused a shortage of street names in developments, or at least of bucolic street names like Babbling Brook and Whispering Glade. Loudoun County, Virginia, a rapidly growing suburban region, employs a Geographic Information Systems Services Coordinator, whose job, in part, is to guard against duplication. The coordinator told *The Washington Post*, "Everybody wants Weeping Willow."

If we could just get language right, the rest would eventually follow: the idea is a venerable one. When it comes to names, though, the sad truth is that reform, rationality, and forward thinking never really work—they usually end in failure or

ridicule. Revolutionary France gave each month of the year a new name that corresponded to its character; thus the autumnal months became *vendémiaire* ("vintage"), *brumaire* ("mist"), and *frimaire* ("frost"). One Englishman responded by calling those months Wheezy, Sneezzy, and Freezy. In the heyday of scientific Marxism people in Russia gave their children names such as Villior (a Russian acronym for "Vladimir Lenin, Initiator of the October Revolution") and Remizan (an acronym for "she participated in world revolution"), names that today must make their bearers feel like dolts.

The tinkerers press on. It hardly used to matter that every language had its own vocabulary for specific body parts. But problems have arisen as the medical profession becomes globalized. What is Rondelet's valve in one place is Achillini's in another and Tulpius's somewhere else. A subcommittee of the International Federation of Associations of Anatomists has developed a new worldwide anatomical lexicon. Although the term "Adam's apple" will surely survive for a time in Anglophone usage, the preferred designation is now "the laryngeal prominence." The declivity between a woman's breasts, which doctors themselves have often referred to as cleavage, will now officially be called "the intermammary sulcus." The term may never catch on, but it probably won't be long before some cybersquatter pays his \$35 for intermammary-sulcus.com.

One indication of what may lie ahead in the realm of reformist nomenclature comes from the European Union, whose central administration, in Brussels, has been wielding ever more power over routine regulatory functions. The language differences among the citizens of the EU's fifteen member nations are considerable, and the lack of a common vernacular strikes some officials as untidy. Last year the Eurocrats issued a Cosmetic Products Safety Directive, which declared that henceforward the names of ingredients in perfume, powder, lipstick, and various toiletries must be written in Latin. If a product contains milk or water, the label must say "*lac*" or "*aqua*." If it contains egg, the label must say "*ovum*." If it contains Brazil nuts or peanut oil, the label must say "*bertholletia excelsa*" or "*arachis hypogaea*." While they were at it, the Eurocrats also decreed that if a product "may or may not contain" a certain substance, the label should replace those words with the symbol +/-.

I happen to like the idea, in general, of extending the use of Latin. (For what it's worth, I also happen to like calling Ethiopia "Abyssinia" and Sri Lanka "Serendip.") More to the point, perhaps, the new regime has historical precedent in its favor: the last time Europe enjoyed true unity, in the days of imperial Rome, Latin really was the continent's common language. Maybe some of the Middle East's animosities could be overcome by reverting to Hittite.

The temptation is always to go too far. I would suggest that the Cosmetic Products Safety Directorate, taking its Latin regulation to heart, engrave over its portals this legend: "*Facilis descensus Averno*—It is easy to go down into Hell." Virgil completed that thought with a question that +/- a timely warning: "But to climb back out?" ☞

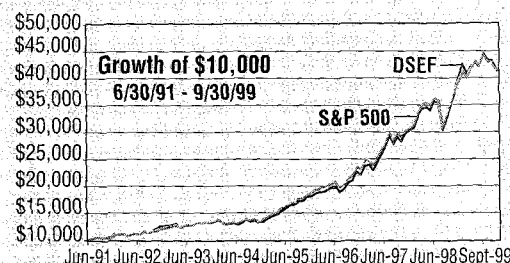
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CHINA'S native chroniclers have long thought that Chinese history moves in circles. Anniversaries resonate with eerie significance, promising opportunities to celebrate progress but also reminding everyone of the possibility of repetition. Divining China's future direction at the start of the

by Trevor Corson

twenty-first century must begin with a reading of its anniversaries at the end of the twentieth. And China has seldom experienced a year so replete with the contradictions of overlapping, politically potent anniversaries as 1999. For China 1999 was the eightieth anniversary of the May Fourth movement,

when the Chinese intelligentsia first advocated the adoption of Western science and democracy. But it was also the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of communism in China. And the twentieth anniversary of the beginning of the era of economic reform under Deng Xiaoping. And the tenth anniversary of the Tiananmen Square democracy movement and massacre.

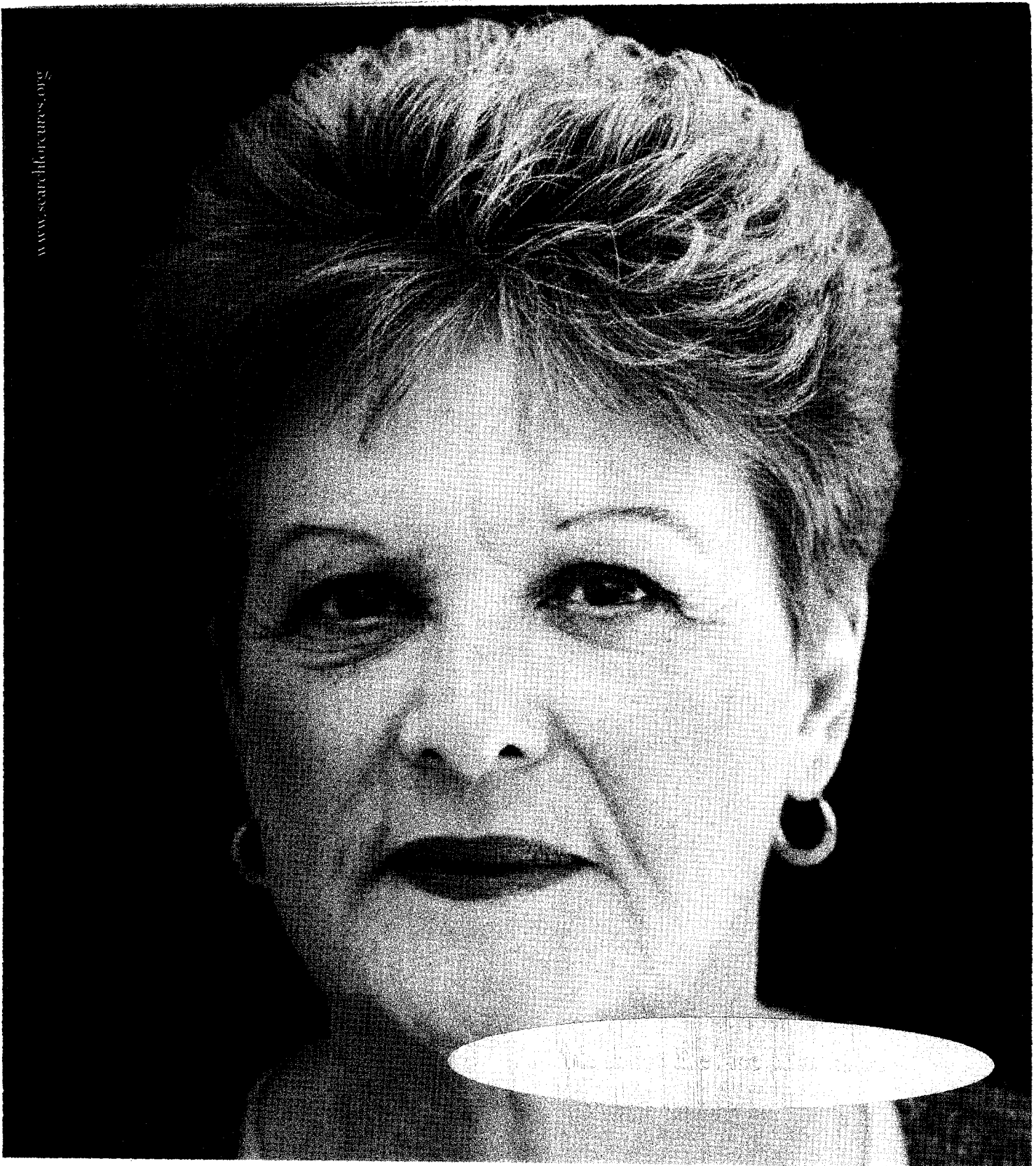
Which anniversary means the most to China now? The May Fourth movement and the Tiananmen movement suggest that China is heading toward democracy, if haltingly. The massacre revives the grim spectacle of China as a fascist juggernaut. Deng's reforms herald economic freedom and the victory of business over ideology. But it may well be the anniversary of the establishment of communism that has circled back most unexpectedly.

Tiananmen was commemorated last June at Harvard University, where the democracy movement's most influential student leaders—Wang Dan, Shen Tong, Chai Ling, Wu'er Kaixi, and a dozen of their fellows—were reunited, over dinner, for the first time since 1989. The centerpiece of all the events was a stirring speech by Coretta Scott King; remarks followed from Representative Nancy Pelosi, of California, and emissaries of Václav Havel and the Dalai Lama. Pelosi declared the movement to be at a turning point, with victory over the Communist regime in sight.

The message was bold and inspiring, but the reality is more complicated. Pelosi has been the dissidents' stalwart ally since 1989, when she first championed their cause in Congress, but since then her influence on this issue has waned on Capitol Hill. So has the clout of the dissidents themselves. During the 1992 presidential campaign they basked in Bill Clinton's good will, but today they must settle for a presidential candidate with more dubious prospects—Gary Bauer was the only other politician to join Pelosi at the Harvard events.

The dissidents, all exiles, are not just at a loss for new American political patronage; they have also become estranged

Above: At a labor market in an industrial city, unemployed workers advertise for jobs



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from their own generation in China and from their Chinese successors at American universities. After Bauer and Pelosi left the Harvard events, a furious discussion in Chinese erupted among the dissidents, led by a woman who had just arrived from Beijing. "For ten years since Tiananmen I've fought to keep the movement alive underground in China," she complained bitterly. "But the only thing our classmates want to do now is make money. They're only interested in business!" At Harvard a few weeks earlier a public meeting of Tiananmen leaders had been marred by a volley of angry questions that a younger Chinese Harvard student aimed at Wang Dan. He blamed the students of 1989 for creating a bloodbath and setting democracy in China back, not moving it ahead.

For China's leaders, the threat of Tiananmen came more from workers than from students. When the government cracked down, it dealt most brutally with workers.

China experts friendly to the Tiananmen dissidents have begun to admit that the movement is of questionable significance for China today. An especially pessimistic assessment came from Chantal de Rudder, a senior editor at *Le Nouvel Observateur*, in Paris, who had befriended the student leaders in Beijing in 1989. De Rudder had just returned from a long stay in China, so I asked her at the Harvard dinner what she made of Pelosi's optimism about the democracy movement. "In China now there is no nostalgia for 1989," she replied. "Even liberal intellectuals in China have done well by the economic reforms. They don't want to upset stability. They want gradualism." Casting an eye over the assembled dissidents, De Rudder shook her head sadly. "These activists are doing what they can, but it

doesn't mean a lot. For the moment they have no influence in China."

Around the corner from where the anniversary dinner was held are the offices of the nation's most distinguished institute for Chinese studies, Harvard's Fairbank Center for East Asian Research. The center is named for the late John King Fairbank, widely admired as the father of Chinese studies in the United States. The director of the Fairbank Center, Elizabeth Perry, a professor of government at Harvard, considers herself a friend to China but harbors no illusions about the regime. Her specialty is Chinese popular protest from the nineteenth century to the present day. Perry's work suggests that resistance to the Communist regime today often has less to do with advocating an American-style political system than with reviving communism.

IN the spring of 1989 Peter Schweitzer covered the student protests in Beijing for CBS. Now a senior producer, he recalls with chagrin how he and his colleagues threw journalistic objectivity to the winds. "In Poland," he remembers, "the weakening of the Communist regime had made the Western press corps into hopeless romantics. We became friends with the Chinese students, even exchanging material about democracy with them. We believed that it was going to happen, that democracy was inevitable."

The origins of the movement among Chinese students were less romantic, and less clearly about democracy per se. At the time, I was a student at Beijing Normal University, where I had been studying for two years. Living and working on the same campus as Chai Ling and Wu'er Kaixi, who would soon take command in Tiananmen Square, I knew that the students were primarily upset about the unfairness of economic reforms. I admired the gumption of my classmates—they were furious that Deng Xiaoping's fondness for capitalism was making the watermelon vendors outside the university gate wealthier than the students themselves could ever hope to become. The Party had a new penchant for black Mercedes limousines, and this irked them too. But as Perry Link, a Princeton professor who helped to spirit the famous dissident Fang Lizhi to safety in the American embassy that year, puts it, "The students were mainly frustrated that corruption in the Communist Party was blocking nation-

alist progress. They wanted themselves and their country to get rich."

The students' political style, too, was not so democratic. Many China watchers, especially those who were on Beijing campuses and in Tiananmen Square, agree that the students knew little of American-style democracy beyond its catchphrases and icons, and were reacting more to their own irrelevance in the reform program than to their country's political system.

For China's leaders, the threat of Tiananmen came more from workers than from students. After Tiananmen, Robin Munro, a researcher at the Hong Kong office of Human Rights Watch, teamed up with George Black, the foreign editor of *The Nation*, to study the movement. Months of exhaustive interviews revealed that the students and the government had close ties, sharing not only a political culture but also an elitist hostility toward the rumbling tide of working-class dissent. To be sure, the Goddess of Democracy that students erected in the square insulted the government, but, Munro and Black wrote in their final report, "the crude red and black banner of the BWAFF [Beijing Workers' Autonomous Federation], less than a hundred yards away, signified the more terrifying power."

Indeed, the regime's economic reformers—Deng Xiaoping and his protégés—had reason to be afraid. Throughout the 1980s the promises made to workers, including the celebrated "iron rice bowl," had melted away as the reforms unleashed limited-term contracts, cheap migrant labor, income inequality, inflation, and official profiteering. Surveys of working-class opinion in the mid-1980s had exposed fury at factory managers who were acting like the unscrupulous capitalists of old China. On October 1, 1985, Beijing bus workers had staged a strike that affected the entire capital. By 1988 an average of two or three strikes a day were being called in China. The students in Tiananmen Square were of little consequence alongside the worker unrest their movement was inspiring. There is evidence that when the government finally resorted to terror to suppress the movement, it deliberately dealt a more brutal blow to workers than it did to students.

This is why Elizabeth Perry says that Tiananmen was most significant as a
(Continued on page 30)

FEBRUARY 2000

arts ENTERTAINMENT

DANCE

Miami City

Ballet's
Sparkling
Jewels

THEATER

Mooning Over
Cherry Jones

CLASSICAL

Weill's
Spectacular
Road

FILM

The Dogma
According
to Mifune

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DANCE & THEATER

RARE JEWELS IN FLORIDA

The Prodigal Son nearly came home last fall; he got as far as Newark. There, at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center, Edward Villella, who memorably played the eponymous



Sparkling, live "Emeralds"

hero in George Balanchine's vivid work (and later used its title for his autobiography), brought his wonderful Miami City Ballet to dance just over the river from his old home at New York City Ballet. It was a triumphant evening, happily to be repeated in Florida throughout February. The ballet of that autumn evening was Balanchine's three-act *Jewels*. It was a howling success when Villella performed in the 1967 debut, heating up the stage in the jazzy, syncopated, set-to-Stravinsky middle number called "Rubies." "Emeralds," a mysterious, wafting, ineluctably verdant homage to France

and to Faure, precedes; "Diamonds," a brilliant, formal homage to St. Petersburg and Tchaikovsky, follows. In recent years the last two acts have been performed separately. Even when all three are reunited, as by New York City Ballet, the effect has been incomplete. "Emeralds" in particular has the reputation of being difficult and remote, yet in actuality it shows in very clear terms that love is now and time is fleeting. The Miami company's performance made this and any number of other truths apparent in a revelation of what reverence—and, when called for, a lack of it—can do. It is as if someone had picked up the entire ballet, dunked it in a sink of soapy water, rinsed it off thoroughly, and polished it dry. The original Miami staggers were

Karin von Aroldingen, Elyse Borne, and none other than Villella himself. Seeing him sit in the audience watching his dancers do what he once did is a compelling experience, bittersweet and buoyant. (Miami, February 4–6; West Palm Beach, February 11–13; Fort Lauderdale, February 23–27; 305-532-7713.) —N.D.

THE EMPRESS JONES

Great tragedies always give audiences a sense of the inevitable made visible. Last season's revival of Eugene O'Neill's *The Iceman Cometh* is a perfect example, a play as primal, mysterious, and awe-inspiring as a cyclone. This season the inevitable is made visible when O'Neill's *A Moon for the Misbegotten* begins previews on Broadway, directly after its run at Chicago's Goodman Theatre concludes, on February 19. Cherry Jones, American theater's pre-eminent acting force of nature, has always seemed fated to play the mythic-sized Josie Hogan, described by the playwright as standing five-feet-eleven and weighing 180 pounds, with "the map of Ireland stamped on her face."

Ireland or no, Jones's face has such expressiveness that one can forget how completely she wrestles herself into whatever role she's playing. Conjure up memories of past triumphs—from her barefoot, feral prisoner in *Our Country's Good* to her Tony Award-winning performance in *The Heiress*—and it's clear why Jones is set to be crowned the successor to Colleen Dewhurst, who gave Josie a landmark interpretation in 1973, opposite Jason Robards. Jones's James Tyrone? Gabriel Byrne, as luck would have it. —J.I.



THE GOODMAN THEATRE

A MID-WINTER'S BOUNTY

This month an enterprising theatergoer with dollars and desire to spare could attend a veritable seminar in postwar African-American playwriting. The lesson would begin with Amiri Baraka's harrowing 1964 subway screech of a morality play, *Dutchman*, running at Hartford Stage (January 13–February 13; 860-527-5151). Lulu, an archetypal seductress (she seduces the young black protagonist, Clay, with apples before killing him) stands in for white culture. Few plays have excavated the tensions of American race relations better. Ntozake Shange's *for colored girls who considered suicide/when the rainbow was enuf* breaks hearts by combining abstract movement with gritty confessional monologues in a way that still seems radical after a quarter century. Having enjoyed a Broadway run in the 1970s, the "choreopoem" is revived by Baltimore's Center



Wilson's *Jitney*

Stage, under George Faison's direction (January 7–February 13; 410-332-0033). Any of Shange's colored girls could be related to the central character in Dr. Endersha Ida Mae Holland's autobiographical play *From the Mississippi Delta*, which details a young woman's journey from prostitution to a professorship. The triumphant,

gutsy work, running at Connecticut's Stamford Theatre Works (February 2–20; 203-359-4414), has been one of the most-often-produced plays in the American theater over the past several seasons. Finally, *Jitney*, August Wilson's first play, gets revived at the Mark Taper Forum, in Los Angeles (February 3–March 19; 213-972-7376), under the direction of Marion McCClinton. Wilson, who made headlines in 1996 with his sharp criticism of the lack of American theaters devoted to black plays, would claim that all this activity by predominantly white theaters was but window-dressing leftovers from Black History Month. But the vibrant range of offerings affirms that there's a history well worth our attention. —J.I.

Nancy Dalva's essays appear in the magazine twice. John Istel is the editor-in-chief of Stagebill.

COVER ILLUSTRATION BY NATALIE ASCENCIOS

FILM

WALKING WOUNDED

“We are all former,” declares an ad-dled protagonist in *Beautiful People*, Jasmin Dizdar’s crowded, ambitious, engrossing first feature about a bunch of messed-up Londoners thrown together in disparate ways by the war in Bosnia. When the director, now twenty-eight years old, landed in London in 1989, he was a former Bosnian refugee and a former student at Prague’s famous film school, where he clearly absorbed the absurdist, borderline slapstick sensibility of the Czech New Wave. *Beautiful People* opens with a street brawl between a Bosnian and a Croat on a London bus, and then fans out to a cast of characters, all walking wounded in one way or another, who will be forced to confront the sources of their fear and hatred in ways that

transform them. A heroin-addicted soccer hooligan, accidentally airlifted to the battlefields of the former Yugoslavia, finds himself caring for an injured Bosnian boy.

An overworked English doctor, his private life in ruins, invites a young Bosnian couple into his home with their newborn baby girl. An upper-crust intern outrages

her snobby parents by taking up with a Bosnian former basketball star. Dizdar is smart enough not to level the field between Bosnia’s civil war and the disorder that is multi-culti England in the nineties, with its frantic mixture of xenophobia, racism, class snobbery, unfocused urban rage, and reflexive kindness in the beleaguered front lines of a crippled welfare system. Dizdar’s tone is sardonic, but he’s no cynic. By the end of the movie a ragged peace prevails: a baby named Chaos has been welcomed into a world primed to resent her, and two former political enemies are playing cards.



Rosalind Ayres, Charlotte Coleman, Edin Dzandzanovic, Charles Kay

TRIMARK PICTURES

DOGMA IN ACTION

To work under the aegis of the Danish film collective Dogma 95 one must take a “Vow of Chastity,” among whose rules are that only hand-held cameras and natural light may be used, genre filmmaking is banned, and the director must “refrain from personal taste.” Curiously, these stuffy strictures have fostered rather than stifled creative spontaneity. The collective’s third movie, *Mifune*, is a black comedy whose antic subversion of propriety and pretension mirrors the strategies of its predecessors. Inspired by the 1997 death of Toshiro Mifune, who played a bogus warrior of peasant origins in Kurosawa’s *The Seven Samurai*, the film stars Anders W. Berthelsen as Kresten, a young business whiz who fudges his poor farming background in order to marry the boss’s daughter. When his father dies, Kresten piles on the lies to keep his snobbish

bride at bay, returning to the dilapidated farm to make funeral arrangements and care for his mentally handicapped older brother, Rud (Jesper Asholt). Desperate to manage the situation, Kresten hires Liva (Iben Hjejle), a beautiful housekeeper who harbors her own



Berthelsen attempts to cope

unsavory secrets. *Mifune* appears to be making itself up as it goes along, which on the one hand frees the narrative from the banal motivational pointers that afflict most Hollywood movies—but on the other encourages mere whimsy, culminating in a finale a touch too sweet for its own anarchic good.

THE EXECUTIONER’S SONG

Given his fascination with topiary gardeners, pet-cemetery operators, murderers, and other American nutballs, it’s no surprise that the documentary filmmaker Errol Morris would take his usual obsessive interest in a self-styled humane executioner. In his new film, *Mr. Death: The Rise and Fall of Fred A. Leuchter, Jr.*, Morris works, as always,



On the road again: Leuchter

with intensive interviews designed to plumb his subjects’ fantasies without judging them. This time the stakes are higher—Leuchter isn’t just an efficiency expert with a compulsive interest in capital punishment. This owlish, naive, and largely self-taught engineer allowed himself to be used by Holocaust deniers, who hired him to illegally collect samples from Auschwitz’s walls, thus “verifying” that the buildings were never used as gas chambers. The resulting “Leuchter Report” was his downfall, but not before millions of copies had been circulated. Morris’s trademark expressionist style, with its glum score and fancy visuals, accompanies Leuchter’s own videotaped journey around Auschwitz, tapping absurdly and, a disgusted Dutch historian observes, sacrilegiously at walls and floors to get his “evidence.” Morris’s masterstroke is to let Leuchter have his head. Gabbing endlessly and pedantically to the camera, he damns himself—not, Morris persuades us, as an anti-Semite but as a lethal innocent whose hubris and naive scientism were corralled with frightening ease to the ends of radical evil.

By Ella Taylor, film critic for LA Weekly.

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CLASSICAL MUSIC

WEILL'S PROPHETIC ROAD

It fits into no category: opera, oratorio, musical play, pageant, biblical drama, masque, mystery play." Thus a German critic, shattered by the experience, attempted to evoke last summer's re-creation of *Der Weg der Verheissung*. Lost from view since its world premiere as *The Eternal Road*, in New York in 1937, Kurt Weill's prophetic magnum opus portrays a Jewish community gathered in a synagogue where, under threat of unspecified terror, the congregants revisit their sacred history. The tales of such forebears as Abraham, Joseph, Moses, and David build to the new exodus or diaspora with which the action ends. Staged in lavish fashion by Max Reinhardt, no less, the original New York version ran for 153 performances; though praised by the critics, it was one of the worst financial debacles in Broadway history. The millennial revival spreads the risk among a consortium of international co-producers. From the cheerless German burg of Chemnitz, the show now comes to the Brooklyn Academy of Music (February 28–March 5; 718-636-4100). Reading about the work, one marvels at the prescience of its creators (Franz Werfel wrote the text), who foresaw and foretold only too well. But how far, in the circumstances, were they able to rise above propaganda, however right-minded? And what do we make of a Burning Bush that sings to Moses in three-quarter time? Where some critics in Chemnitz saw revelation, others saw travesty and betrayal.



Road in Chemnitz

DIETER WUSCHANSKI

FOR THE FALLEN

Benjamin Britten dedicated his *War Requiem* (1962) to four men who fell in the Second World War; they are named in the score, with their ranks. But in a larger sense the work stands as music's Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. "I am the enemy you killed, my friend," the baritone sings in a setting of poems by Wilfred Owen, a casualty of the prior conflict. The English verses are interwoven with the Latin of the traditional Requiem mass, which in its most harrowing passage records the terrors of the soul on the brink of the Last Judgment. The juxtaposition of such impersonal ancient text in a foreign tongue with the idiomatic voice of a single individual creates a counterpoint of peculiar force, tacitly acknowledging the bond between any man and Everyman. The clashing musical styles—hieratic and rhetorical for the soprano soloist and chorus; introspective for the two male soloists, seen at times as fighters in enemy armies—underscore Britten's pacifist message in similar fashion. Multinational casting, though no requirement, can add to the ceremony. The world premiere, in bomb-struck Coventry Cathedral, featured the all-star trio of Galina Vishnevskaya (Russian), Peter Pears (English), and Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau (German) under Britten's own direction. With the Boston Symphony the soloists are Christine Goerke (American), Ian Bostridge (English), and Thomas Quasthoff (German). Seiji Ozawa, who conducts, is, of course, Japanese (February 23–29; 617-266-1200).



The BSO's Seiji Ozawa

C. STEINER

A ROMAN HOLIDAY IN FLORIDA AND WASHINGTON, D.C.

How to cast the title role of Handel's *Julius Caesar*? ("Giulio Cesare" to you.) Back when Beverly Sills warbled her way to international stardom as Cleopatra, her leading man was Norman Treigle, a bass. He looked every inch the commander, but his gravelly timbre and rough-hewn coloratura would never fly today. To Handel, the voice of choice for heroes was the mezzo-soprano. Whether it issued from the throat of a surgically altered male or from that of a woman in male attire concerned him little. The rise of historically informed performance practice has brought back many things, but so far not the castrato. Instead we have the modern countertenor, who may, for all we know, be

a quite different kettle of fish acoustically but whose vocal color and panache in his finest incarnations strike many contemporary ears as just what the doctor ordered. Now that Handel's kings and knights and generals are being sung at the right pitch, however, the parts are once again fair game for women, too.

Thus it transpires that this month opera lovers with frequent-flyer miles to spare will be jetting up and down the East Coast to compare two contenders for the title of greatest Roman of them all. Florida Grand Opera, per-

forming in Miami and Fort Lauderdale, fields David Daniels, who scores with his golden timbre, seductive musicianship, and moody flair (February 9–26; 800-741-1010). At the Washington Opera all eyes and ears will be on the smoky-voiced Vivi-

ca Genaux, a lithe beauty who pounces on her music with the killer instinct of a tiger (February 12–March 9; 202-295-2400).



A pre-Cleopatra Genaux

GEORGE LANDIS, THE DALLAS OPERA

By Austin Baer, a writer based in New York.

Looking for lively fine arts programming on television? Tune in for *Breakfast With the Arts* (February 13 and 20, 9:00 a.m.) on the A&E Network. Hosted by the arts journalist Elliott Forrest, *Breakfast With the Arts* features Arts and Entertainment News and The A&E Artist of the Week along with opera, symphony, ballet, and much more. Chrysler is proud to sponsor *Breakfast With the Arts* and other fine programming, and this edition of the Arts & Entertainment Preview.

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**A factory district in the “rust belt” of northeastern China.
Many of the state-owned enterprises here face deep financial trouble.
Bankruptcies have been common in recent years**

(Continued from page 22)

Marxist movement. Perry quotes from a manifesto issued by the rebellious BWAF at the height of the 1989 protests: “We have carefully considered the exploitation of the workers. Marx’s *Capital* provided us with a method for understanding the character of our oppression. . . . Bureaucrats use the people’s hard-earned money to build luxury villas . . . to buy luxury cars, to travel to foreign countries.” Against a Communist Party that was converting itself into a class of capitalists, the workers held the moral (and Marxist) high ground.

In 1989 it was ground that conservatives in the Communist leadership were eager to exploit. For them, Deng’s economic reforms had already gone too far. In 1966 the Cultural Revolution had begun with student radicals in the streets; it had led to a revival of pure Communist ideals and the toppling of economic pragmatists. The most powerful of those pragmatists had been Deng himself; he was unlikely

to make the same mistake twice. In the weird calculus of Chinese politics—and contrary to the conventional wisdom on Tiananmen—Deng’s 1989 crackdown on dissent was as much a rejection of hard-line communism as a return to it.

IN one of China’s industrial cities a Western manager I’ll call Carl runs a small factory. The housing block where he and his wife reside is average by Western standards but luxurious for locals; most of its occupants come from China’s nouveaux riches. Carl drove me there in his modest Chinese-made car. To reach the guarded gate we negotiated an endless stream of bicycling citizenry; on the way in we barely avoided a lumbering donkey cart piled with dirty peasants and recycled cardboard. Once inside, Carl parked among the cars of his Chinese neighbors: several brand-new Mercedes Benzes, a selection of shiny Cadillacs, an Italian sports car, and an American stretch limo.

In the mid-1980s the city’s factory

managers were given unprecedented freedom to pursue profits. Today the downtown is thriving: new businesses are everywhere, and even in the state-run market one can buy almost anything. One vendor offered me a comrade’s discount on a cigarette lighter in the shape of a Cupid, with glowing red eyes and a flame penis. Behind an unmarked rubber curtain I found a market where mobs of consumers jostled through a long hall of stalls selling pirated movies and software on CD. I calculated that for the price of a lunch in the United States, I could pick up ten or twenty of the latest American films and the newest version of Microsoft Windows NT. Carl had told me that most of the fancy cars parked outside his apartment building had been smuggled into the city from abroad.

The illicit side of reform in the city is a reminder that corruption and inequality have permeated the process—and generated festering reserves of ill will. I asked a U.S. Foreign Service officer and an American automobile executive, both of whom worked in the region, whether Party cadres retained any credibility. They had similar reactions. The city’s govern-

ment officials, they said, infuriatingly corrupt and keen to skim profits, used their new entrepreneurial skills at every turn to block progress toward efficient management.

Carl's factory, however, is a clean, friendly place with modern machinery and proper pollution control. One of two Western managers overseeing a staff of local workers, Carl speaks Chinese fluently and enjoys an easy rapport with his employees. On the day I visited, I lunched with the workers on tasty cafeteria food and then joined them to cheer as one of their own trounced Carl in a good-natured game of Ping-Pong, a common occurrence in the factory's spacious recreation room.

The scene across the street was far more representative of the city: there sprawled a decrepit state-owned factory, shoddily constructed of brick, now crumbling and dusted with a heavy layer of soot. Until recently workers had toiled there in exchange for government IOUs. Declared bankrupt under China's new market system, the factory had been abandoned. "We've seen a lot of protests and riots lately," Carl told me. "Laid-off state workers want their back pay—not to mention their jobs. I've been late for work a few times when crowds of state-owned-factory retirees were protesting in the streets. They haven't gotten a pension payment for many months."

The recent history of labor strife in this area of China has attracted the attention of Elizabeth Perry, of the Fairbank Center. She considers the region one of China's most volatile—indeed, it has been a hotbed of Communist revolt for several years. An example of labor unrest she gives occurred just a few years ago, when more than 5,000 workers at the local steel works took to the streets shouting "Down with the newborn bourgeoisie," "Yes to socialism, no to capitalism," and "Long live the working class." A similar protest took place in front of the government offices the following year.

It is estimated that about a quarter of all state workers in the city had been laid off by 1994; that's probably too few to prevent the ailing state-owned sector from dragging the economy into collapse and taking the country along with it. For decades China's industries simply followed the government's economic plan; they never learned how to keep proper accounts, be efficient, or turn a profit.

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Almost half of them lose money; they are kept afloat by government debt, and generally they employ far more workers than they need. Gao Shangquan, formerly a vice-minister of China's powerful State Commission on Economic Restructuring, now a professor at Beijing University and the director of an economic think tank, told me recently that he calculates the number of redundant workers still clogging China's state industries to be around 24 million.

Some observers have been impressed not by how much worker unrest China has seen but by how little. China's reformers managed to appease many laid-off state workers in past years by furloughing them on reduced salaries, with benefits, rather than firing them outright. However, the plight of the workers appears to be getting worse. Chinese government statistics indicate that in 1998 the ranks of state workers fell by almost 20 million, a huge reduction over previous years. Admittedly, this figure is difficult to interpret, because part of the change may simply be due to the reclassification of furloughed workers as no longer employed by the state. But the government does anticipate additional large layoffs in textiles, steel, railroads, coal mining, and the military over the coming months.

Thomas Rawski is a China specialist in the economics department at the University of Pittsburgh. "Employment growth in other sectors has stalled, and government policies to boost employment are ineffective," he told me not long ago. "And yet the reform process can't be undone. The lower levels of government have already been told they can lay off workers. Even if the policy-makers at the top change their minds, it's too late to reverse direction."

WHILE the Tiananmen generation reflects on the past promise of democracy, a new generation of Chinese students, both at home and abroad, is looking ahead to the overwhelming challenges facing China in its risky bid to move toward a market-based economic system. Unlike their predecessors, these young Chinese tend to favor working within the limits set by the regime. Like their predecessors, they are dreamers—but they're keeping at least one eye open. They know that in the short term the crux of China's future is those 24 million

excess workers. To their credit, though many of them are studying in the United States, they are keen to return to China and make a difference.

Yet the system within which they are so eager to work is hopelessly mismanaged. Perry Link, of Princeton, and his colleague Liu Binyan, one of China's most seasoned independent journalists, wrote a scathing critique of Chinese "reform" for *The New York Review of Books* in 1998. They used the research of an unorthodox economist named He Qinglian, whose work made a bad joke of the idea that economic reform in China has led to anything that deserves to be called progress. Officials in charge of implementing economic change were never made accountable to the people through accompanying political reforms, so the entire system became corrupt. The result, the economist showed, has been not the production of wealth but simply its transfer. The growing "free" market in China is mostly about well-connected entrepreneurs speculating with public funds, pocketing the profits, and assigning the losses to the state. When Chinese workers pen Marxist manifestos and take to the streets against their new capitalist oppressors, it is these government opportunists about whom they are up in arms.

Contrary to conspiracy theories about a small clique of robber barons, however, just about everyone in China's burgeoning middle and upper classes is implicated. When I lived in China, in the late 1980s, ordinary transactions were for my Chinese friends a matter of identifying the government official who could help and slipping him something under the table. David Goodman, a China expert in Australia, has documented such corruption extensively and concludes that as long as the Communist Party remains committed to its version of reform, Chinese citizens who are making money have a vested interest in playing along. "Far from being alienated from the party-state or seeking their own political voice," Goodman writes in a chapter of *The Paradox of China's Post-Mao Reforms* (1999), the new middle classes "appear to be operating in close proximity and through close cooperation" with the government. Laborers in the ailing state-owned sector, who number somewhere around 70 or 80 million, are clearly losing out, as the wealth they

produce is squandered on the one hand and the security they have enjoyed is revoked on the other. China also has at least 70 million workers toiling in semi-private industries in townships and villages. Several million more work in enterprises financed by capital from outside mainland China. Martin King Whyte, a sociologist at George Washington University, studies how workers in these latter two groups are faring and compares their plight with the worsening lot of state employees.

"Working conditions in TVEs [township and village enterprises]," Whyte has written, range "from paternalistic to dreadful." In 1994 China passed a labor law relating to such enterprises that specified workers' rights, in terms of maximum hours per week, maximum over-

In the weird calculus of Chinese politics—and contrary to conventional wisdom—Deng's 1989 crackdown on dissent was as much a rejection of hardline communism as a return to it.

time, minimum wages, and the like. But the law is widely ignored, particularly because many of the workers in these factories are rural migrants who are thus a long way from home and easy to exploit. Their working conditions are appalling: toiling twelve hours a day or longer, seven days a week, they operate unsafe equipment and have accidents at high rates, meanwhile earning miserable pay. Injured workers are simply replaced, and arbitrary wage reductions and firings are common. In most factories financed from outside mainland China the picture is even worse. About 80 percent of such enterprises are established with capital from Hong Kong, Taiwan, and South Korea; they exhibit the harsh regimens and abusive treatment of the stereotypical sweatshop.

IF China's private sector can keep growing enough to absorb excess labor, and if economic-cum-social solutions similar to those advanced by the emerging post-Tiananmen elite succeed, a long-term transition away from repression and toward a regulated capitalism could well get under way. Enough new laws have been passed that Chinese citizens are now able to sue government officials over unfair treatment, and they are beginning to do so; on the village level elections are being instituted that might eventually provide a model for the country as a whole.

If, on the other hand, China's economy falters while masses of workers are laid off, the prospects are bad. Since a nationwide revolution against the status quo seems unlikely, worker revolt would probably result only in a protracted war of attrition by the government. The recent crackdown on the religious sect Falun Gong would look like a mild warm-up exercise by comparison.

The United States can do very little to affect the trajectory of Chinese history, but what it does do could be significant. Western corporations that subcontract in China with unscrupulous East Asian operators should be called to account, and human-rights organizations must continue to monitor the plight of Chinese labor. But cutting off direct U.S. business dealings—whether investment or exports—with China, as many human-rights activists demand, is likely only to pamper our consciences at the expense of desperate Chinese workers. In the short term, by joining the World Trade Organization, China does risk increased layoffs, owing to international competition. In the longer term, though, the more Westerners there are doing business in China (like Carl in his factory), the better Chinese working conditions are likely to become. Punishing China economically in an effort to encourage American-style political change could, by undermining the power of economic reformers, have quite unintended consequences. "If China's elites once again fragment into conflicting factions," Martin Whyte writes in *The Paradox of China's Post-Mao Reforms*, "it is not unlikely that more-conservative leaders will denounce exploitation of workers and attempt to recruit proletarian support for their cause." In attempting to kill off the last vestiges of Chinese communism, the United States would have orchestrated the rise of old-school Marxists instead. ☸

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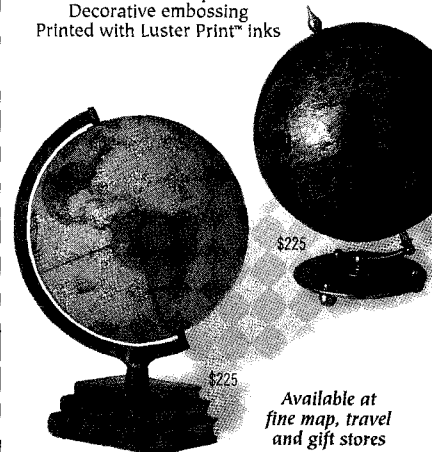
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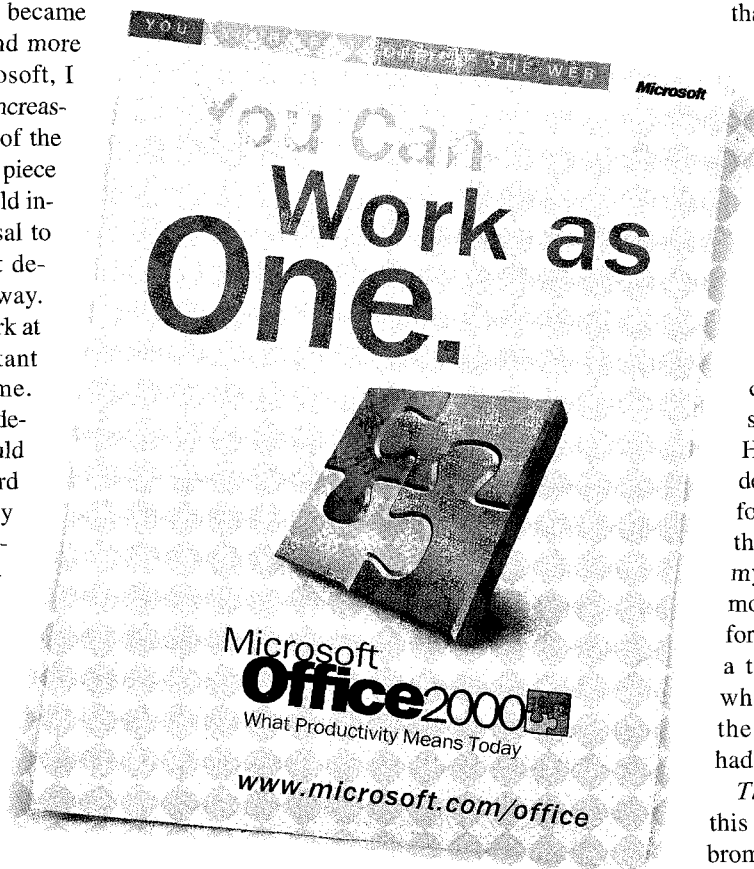
Inside the Leviathan

*A short and stimulating brush with
Microsoft's corporate culture*

DURING the first six months of last year I worked at Microsoft's headquarters, in Redmond, Washington, on a team designing the next release of Microsoft Word. For me this started out as the midlife fulfillment of a fantasy. I'd been intrigued by software design since 1979, when I started using my first word-processing program, The Electric Pencil, on a prehistoric computer called the Processor Technology SOL-20. As programs became bigger, fatter, stronger, and more fully controlled by Microsoft, I found myself drawing up increasingly elaborate wish lists of the features that a really great piece of software for writers would include. So I made a proposal to try to persuade Microsoft designers to see things my way. The terms were that I'd work at the company as a consultant for a fixed period of time. Any of "my" features they decided were worthwhile could be included as part of Word or Office, but anything they decided not to use would remain my intellectual property, so that in some theoretical other life I could start a company and sell my own little word processor in competition with theirs.

The terms also covered what I could say about the experience when it was over. Naturally, I had to promise to protect Microsoft's trade secrets. I also volunteered not to publish a memoir or an "inside Microsoft" confessional—or not to do so without allowing the company to read and approve it ahead of time, which is the same thing as agreeing not to do it. In exchange Mi-

crosoft allowed me to "draw on my experience" at the company in future writing about technology. It is a hazy distinction, but I think we understood each other. I didn't want to make it less likely that another interested outsider would be taken seriously by the company, but I also couldn't accept a blanket prohibition against ever saying anything about the interaction.



My contacts at Microsoft knew that through the 1990s I'd written warnings about the company's growing monopoly power. So why did I want to work there? Because Microsoft had eliminated the competition. If you want to affect the pro-

gram people use for writing, you have to deal with Word. We agreed to disagree about the antitrust trial, which was under way while I worked there; I kept my views about it to myself unless asked.

Under these terms I spent an almost entirely enjoyable, and more or less productive, six months in Redmond, working mainly on Word but also on features that might be used in some other parts of the Microsoft Office "suite" of programs (which includes Word, PowerPoint, the spreadsheet program Excel, the e-mail and scheduling program Outlook, and others). Some of the features I was most excited about may well survive to appear in the next release of Word, which is supposed to go on sale sometime next year. Others were killed off early in the process. Sorry, no details! This is life in the world of trade secrets. You'll know that my features prevailed if

you find me grabbing strangers next year, saying, "Hey, look how cool this program is! Wonder where they got the idea for it?" Until then what I can try to convey, in a form that matches the "generalities only" spirit of my agreement with Microsoft, is the instructive surprise of the experience. Having read about software design and Microsoft culture for many years, I found a few things that exactly matched my expectations. But many more things did not. Just before leaving Microsoft, I gave a talk "on campus" about what I'd learned. These are the things that I told them had surprised me:

The people are nice. Okay, this sounds like a high school bromide. The reason it's worth mentioning is that it is a surprise, given both the public's and the software industry's impressions of the company. At Redmond the prevailing view is that Microsoft has prospered strictly because it builds great software, and that Americans can't help being proud that their dynamic national culture has

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spawned such entrepreneurs. That strikes me as being years out of sync with the real national attitude. Polls indicate that people still admire Bill Gates—who will, after all, probably rank as the greatest American business strategist of the twentieth century. But the devastating “findings of fact” in the antitrust case last November said that the company had gone out of its way to squash competitors, which in effect reduced the rate of innovation in mainstream software products to whatever Microsoft chose to do. This is the view the software industry has held for a long time—with the added twist that Microsoft employees are thought to be haughty, sharp-tongued, and prickly to deal with.

Perhaps my standards were skewed. After all, before working at Microsoft I’d been hanging out with journalists and political types in Washington, D.C. And I never had to face Microsoft’s intensity as a competitor. Viewed from within, though, this was about as collegial and nonbackbiting an environment as I’ve ever been part of. What people considered a sharp exchange about features or strategy (they call such a disagreement “push-back”) was nothing compared with the way lawyers, journalists, or politicians snap at one another.

A small but noticeable group within the Redmond work force would have to be considered geeks: grossly over- or under-weight, weirdo hair and clothes, various hygienic oddities. One guy appeared to have a boa constrictor living in his office (it *was* in a cage). Another office contained several thousand empty soft-drink cans. A man who befriended me when I arrived had rigged up a way to see what his cats were doing at home in Seattle while he was at work in Redmond.

But even the oddest people seemed generally to have a sense of humor about themselves, and at least as large a group seemed happy, well balanced, normally proportioned, and so on. I got into a little psychological cold war with one manager, who considered me a spy and wouldn’t talk to me. I took every opportunity to glower at him in the halls. But I was in good spirits during the forty-minute drive from Seattle to Redmond each morning, because I looked forward to spending time with everyone else.

There was a lot of time to spend, because the next surprise was that *the pace is slow*. I figured out, not quite soon enough, that it drove my colleagues crazy to hear this observation, so eventually I stopped mentioning it. Nonetheless, it was true: the work week seemed less grueling at Microsoft than at other organizations I’ve been part of. There was a noticeable thinning in the parking lots by the middle of Friday afternoons. It seemed as if every week or so work shut down for some campus-wide or division-wide party.



*Microsoft relies
as heavily on face-
to-face contact as
any organization
I’ve ever seen.*

I had assumed that Microsoft’s pace would be at the workaholic extreme of society, but compared with people in other very hard-driving organizations—high-powered law firms, investment banks, presidential election campaigns, Internet startups, even newspapers and weekly magazines—the people at Microsoft seemed to average fewer hours a week and a lower percentage of all-nighters. Compared with other companies of more than 30,000 employees, of course, Microsoft keeps up quite a brisk pace.

Naturally, some people at Microsoft, including senior managers, do work all the time, and at certain points in the software production cycle lots of people have to work nonstop. This is especially so during “bug-bashing” sessions, when defects in program code have to be cleaned up to meet deadlines. Colleagues pointed out to me that if I stayed for a whole development cycle, over two or three years, I’d see the pace pick up. I was used to the much shorter cycles of the magazine world, where the “slow times” are a day or two, not six-month stretches.

SOMEHOW I had also assumed that the higher one moves up the technology pyramid, the more “virtual” the working experience becomes. Even journalism and publishing, no one’s idea of technology pioneers, have been transformed in the past half-dozen years by e-mail (as they were earlier by the telegraph, the telephone, and the fax). Over the phone and by e-mail editors and writers often have very close working relationships for months on end without actually seeing each other. I could only imagine how much more disembodied the working style would be at a company whose very products are designed to let people work together with no more than electronic connections.

I was intrigued, therefore, to find that Microsoft relies as heavily on face-to-face contact as any organization I’ve ever seen. *The culture is meeting-centric*. To make a difference one must be at the headquarters, must come to the office, must sit through meetings. Microsoft has employees scattered around the globe, but nearly everyone whose job is to plan or develop software works within a mile of Bill Gates’s office. (The exceptions are people developing foreign-language versions or working at certain subsidiary companies that Microsoft has bought but not moved to Redmond.) The basic units of the working day are collaborative meetings, scheduled in blocks of one or more hours, where people argue over what features to include in a program or how to get rid of certain bugs. Every employee has an office; every office has a whiteboard, on which people can write ideas or priority lists for others to see during a meeting. Much of the company’s

work occurs in planned or unplanned gatherings around a whiteboard. Between the meetings are hallway conversations or talks in the cafeteria, where nearly everyone eats nearly every day.

People do work on their own. The developers, who do the actual software coding, may hole up for days to work on certain features. The program managers, who are supposed to itemize the tricks the developers will make a program do, may also vanish, to finish program specifications. But it seemed as if the company was as dependent as a football team on having its members at the same place at the same time. Maybe this is because developing good software requires an unusual mixture of talents—that, at least, is the explanation I often heard at Microsoft for its emphasis on face-to-face collaboration. Or maybe it suggests some skepticism about the extent to which workplaces will ever become virtual.

The planning process is radically “bottom-up” and surprisingly nonpolitical. I am sure that “Now hear this!” directives about the evolution of new software come periodically from Bill Gates, Steve Ballmer (the president of Microsoft), and the company’s other strategists. In 1995 Gates famously ordered the company to reverse course and take the Internet seriously. Office 2000, which had been completed just as I got there, reflected a from-the-top emphasis on making all programs compatible with the Internet. But strategic documents never filtered down to my level. What I did see was a quite amazing process in which programs were decided on, shaped, revised, and implemented almost entirely by people at the working level, without the need for big shots to resolve arguments.

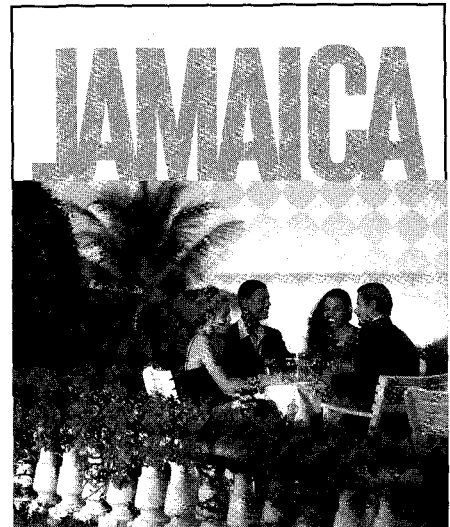
Part of my role was to argue that it would be good for customers, and therefore ultimately good for Microsoft, to build in certain features that would make Word or Outlook easier to use. In some organizations the most effective scheme of action might be: 1) persuade the boss that this feature is a good idea, and 2) have the boss tell someone to produce the feature. At Microsoft the process seems to be: 1) persuade your colleagues that a certain feature will be popular, and that it can be created, and 2) create it. If there is something you love or hate about Microsoft programs, don’t thank or blame Bill Gates; some specific member of the Microsoft team decided to “own” that feature

and include it in a program. There is even a person who created the “It looks like you’re writing a letter” auto-annoyance feature in Word. I had to sign a separate confidentiality clause promising not to name him.

I didn’t always, or even usually, agree with the list of features that survived this process. But I was struck by the dispassion and apparent lack of scheming that went into deliberations about what to include. This may have been in part because supervisors stayed away from the details of product planning—there is no need to play the courtier if final decisions rest with your peers. But I think it also reflected a shared understanding that everyone was on the same team: the Microsoft Stock Option Team. If someone on the other side of the table had a better idea than yours for making the program attractive, you might as well give in gracefully, in view of the potentially stupendous rewards.

WHICH brings us to money. For the first week or two I was hit surprisingly hard by the realization that I was the poorest nonjanitorial worker in my building. (I was there as a temporary consultant; only long-term employees are eligible for stock options.) At some point I stopped thinking about it and tried to observe the way everyone else thought and talked about money. They talked about its consequences quite a lot. Standard lunch-table chat would concern the new boat or sports car someone had bought. And when Microsoft stock was moving up or down, there was a fair amount of hallway chatter about it. But on the fundamental questions—How much do you have? How much do you need?—people were taciturn. Everyone recognized the concept of having “enough” money to quit and do something else, as a large number of Microsoft veterans have done. But almost no one would specify how much would be enough.

Certain aspects of Microsoft culture reminded me of Japan. The company is self-contained and thinks of itself as separate from the rest of the industry. It cares about market share above all else. Its talent pool is remarkable at the low end for how competent the weakest person is. But more and more often I found myself thinking that *Microsoft is like the military*. I don’t mean by this what the company’s detractors presumably would: that it is a rampaging force bent on world



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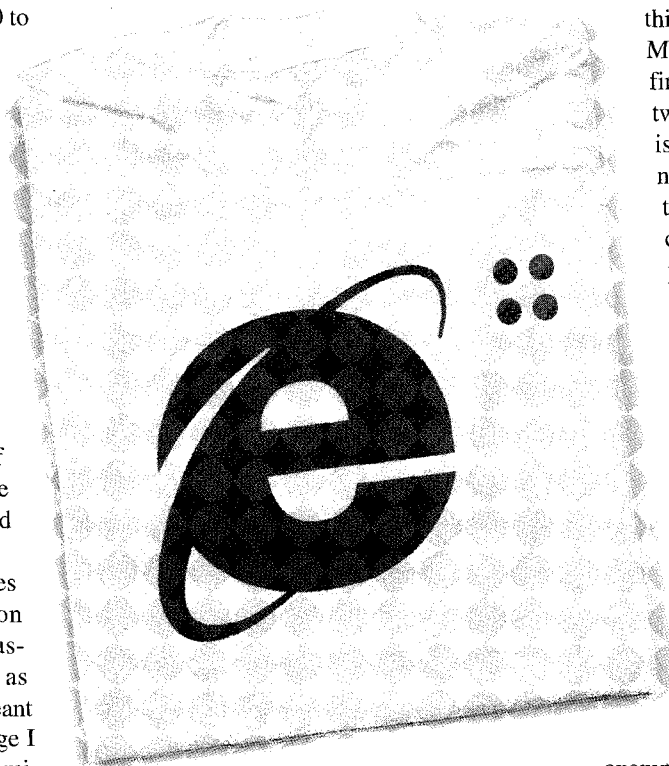
domination. I mean that in many small aspects of daily life and in the large questions of long-term strategy the organization resembles a big, successful military establishment.

Once this idea got into my head, I couldn't stop seeing evidence for it. When on the job, people in the Army wear clothes saying U.S. ARMY. At least a third of the people in the Microsoft cafeteria wore shirts or jackets saying MICROSOFT. The military has a PX; Microsoft has the Company Store, where employees can buy Microsoft products at 70 to 80 percent off list price. For the mess hall there is the cafeteria. For the rec center there is a huge fitness club—officially run by a different company, but nearly all the members are from Microsoft. A military base is full of vaguely insulting posters urging service people not to pass bad checks, not to get VD, not to have fatal accidents. Microsoft buildings are full of posters with messages like WRITE GREAT CODE! and YOU CAN WORK AS ONE.

Most Microsoft employees thought that my comparison with the military fed the industry view of their company as a heartless machine, but I meant it as a compliment. The image I had in mind was the great, dominant U.S. military of the Second World War and the decade after, combining varied talents and getting the job done. Especially in combat, the military tolerates all sorts of idiosyncrasies, as long as everyone pulls together when it counts. The superficially oddball developers do pull together: indeed, there seems to be very little grouching about the rightness of the largest corporate goals. The military famously prizes effectiveness rather than efficiency: it matters more that you beat the enemy than that you get high productivity per manhour out of your troops. So, too, in software. Half the time developers are shooting Nerf cannons at one another, waiting for instructions from the program managers, but then they all do what needs to be done.

There is one crucial difference between the tech economy and the military. This point is very touchy, and I am care-

ful not to associate it with Microsoft in particular—not just because I signed an agreement. The software world, like the U.S. military, contains great racial diversity. People of every skin color work in Redmond—and in Sunnyvale and in San Jose. The difference is that the dark-skinned people who work in high tech are nearly all non-American. They are from India, perhaps from Malaysia, sometimes from Kenya or Ethiopia.



*The company
resembles a
big, successful
military
establishment.*

American blacks have about the same representation in software development that American Jews have in pro basketball. Eventually this will become a problem. To his credit, Gates took a step toward heading it off with his Gates Millennium Scholars Program, which will support advanced science and tech-

nology education for 20,000 students from under-represented minorities.

One other discovery helped me understand why the company has remained so profitable and dominant. *Microsoft understands exactly who its most important customers are.* Unfortunately, that group does not include people like me.

Financial analysts have long recognized that Microsoft's profit really comes from two sources. One is operating systems (Windows, in all its varieties), and the other is the Office suite of programs. Everything else—Flight Simulator, *Slate*, MSNBC, mice and keyboards—is financially meaningless. What these two big categories have in common is that individuals are not the significant customers. Operating systems are sold mainly to computer companies such as Dell and Compaq, which pass them pre-loaded to individual consumers. And the main paying customers for Office are big corporations (or what the high-tech world calls LORGS, for "large-size organizations"), which may buy thousands of "seats" for their employees at hundreds of dollars apiece. Product planning, therefore, is focused with admirable clarity on those whose decisions really matter to Microsoft—the information-technology manager at Chevron or the U.S. Department of Agriculture, for example—rather than some writer with an idea about how to make his colleagues happier with a program.

This survival focus did not please me in all its consequences, but it made me think that this is an organization that knows how to succeed. And Microsoft's very success in satisfying the LORG market makes clear another step in the evolution of the tech economy. The software business no longer seems to have room for small companies that address the tastes of a specialized audience—for instance, professional writers. But the Internet, with its near-zero distribution costs and its ability to group widely dispersed people with common tastes, may be a hospitable environment for boutique enterprises. Maybe that's where I'll launch my little word-processor company—unless Microsoft, now alert to my plans, decides that a great program for magazine writers really would be a "killer app." ☛

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40	\$ 123	\$ 158	\$ 185	\$ 238	\$ 260
45	\$ 190	\$ 215	\$ 253	\$ 330	\$ 385
50	\$ 253	\$ 290	\$ 363	\$ 490	\$ 495
55	\$ 365	\$ 413	\$ 550	\$ 835	\$ 1,015
60	\$ 503	\$ 615	\$ 845	\$ 2,135	\$ 2,400
65	\$ 775	\$ 975	\$ 1,593	\$ 3,900	\$ 3,900
70	\$1,338	\$1,600	\$2,970	\$ 7,220	\$ 7,220
75	\$2,275	\$ 4,870	\$5,820	\$10,370	\$12,420

Male Premiums

Age	10 YEAR	15 YEAR	20 YEAR	25 YEAR	30 YEAR
35	\$ 123	\$ 138	\$ 165	\$ 223	\$ 253
40	\$ 148	\$ 183	\$ 225	\$ 288	\$ 335
45	\$ 225	\$ 300	\$ 360	\$ 450	\$ 513
50	\$ 338	\$ 455	\$ 525	\$ 743	\$ 828
55	\$ 500	\$ 670	\$ 768	\$ 1,640	\$ 2,330
60	\$ 783	\$ 990	\$1,335	\$ 3,630	\$ 3,630
65	\$1,330	\$ 1,650	\$2,693	\$ 5,250	\$ 5,250
70	\$2,473	\$ 3,175	\$4,860	\$ 8,790	\$ 8,790
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Desert Hideaway

*A visit to the sunstruck landscape of
Death Valley, and to the isolated cabin where
Charles Manson lived in 1969*

LOS ANGELES is a desert (or almost), but sometimes you want even more desert. What you do then is get in the car and take the 10 to the 405 to the 5 to the 14, or the 55 to the 91 to the 15, or some other combination of highways heading roughly northeast from the city, and after an hour and a half or two hours the expanses of pavement have narrowed, the sky is a bright blue tinged with smog, and empty, unmistakable desert is all around. Brown hills dotted with small bushes as regularly spaced as beard stubble rise on the hori-

by Ian Frazier

zon; low brush beside the road holds shreds of fluttering trash. A canyon is filled with boulders heaped up like paperwork you'll never get to. Then comes a broad flat plain of nothing but gray sand and rocks, with a single anomalous object—an orange traffic cone, the hood from a barbecue grill—resting in the middle distance, as if to aid perspective.

If you stay on the 15 toward Las Vegas and night falls, the four lanes of headlights and taillights become a string dwindling far across the darkness. Suddenly, at the Nevada border, the lit-up

casino town of Primm appears, as gaudy as a funhouse entrance. I don't go that way, though; for some reason, Las Vegas does not interest me. Instead I take the 14 north through the high-desert town of Mojave. Just past there a field of wind turbines hums in the wind, the long, propellerlike blades on towers eighty feet high throwing giant shadows as they turn, some clockwise, some counterclockwise. Across the highway from them, to the west, an airfield full of used passenger jets bleaches in the sun. The map shows the Los Angeles Aqueduct as a blue line running nearby. In fact the aqueduct here is an imposing white pipe eight feet across that wanders the contours of the dirt-bike-furrowed hills like a garden hose. From 14 I cut across on a two-lane road to the old mining town of Randsburg, and from there continue to Trona, a lakeside town whose lake dried up 20,000 years ago, leaving a bone-white salt flat that is said to contain half the natural elements known to man. IMC Chemicals, a sprawling enterprise, now mines the flat; Trona smells like

sulfur and is windy, gritty, and hot. Past Trona, over some hills and across another vast and shimmering desert flat, is the western boundary of Death Valley National Park.

DEATH Valley is the largest national park in the lower forty-eight states, and it includes more than three million acres of wilderness. At its center is the long, low desert valley from which the park takes its name. Toward the east side of the valley is a fancy inn, the Furnace Creek Inn, and an eighteen-hole golf course. The first time I went to Death Valley was to play golf. I had wondered what a golf course in the desert, 214 feet below sea level, would be like. When I got to the pro shop, a high wind was whipping the tamarisk trees that enclose the course, and dark storm clouds were pouring over the barren Panamint Range to the west like spilled paint. The guy in the pro shop said the storm was supposed to hit in an hour, but if I wanted to play, it was my money. The bad weather had emptied the course, a situation I like; I am such an indifferent golfer that I prefer there be no witnesses. Also, I am afraid of injuring somebody. I teed off, occasionally running down to a green to reset a flag knocked over by the wind. By the time I reached the fifth hole, the storm had turned to the north, the wind had dropped, and the sun emerging on the horizon lit the course like a klieg light. Mourning doves were eating the recently sown grass seed on the tees, and a pair of coyotes had emerged to stalk the ducks and Canada geese gabbling in the hazards. A coyote with eyes only for the waterfowl was sitting on his haunches on the fringe of the seventh green.

The village of Furnace Creek sits in a natural oasis and makes a green rectangle on the desert floor. Along with the inn and the golf course there are campgrounds, a motel, and the headquarters of the Park Service. Tour buses and little rental cars come and go, and tourists—many of them Germans, who seem to have a thing for deserts—line up at the cash registers in the gift shop. Just a step on the other side of the tamarisk-tree border extreme desert begins. One afternoon I ducked through the trees at a corner of the golf course and walked across desert like gray pie crust to the village of the Timbisha Shoshone Indians, a half mile or so away. I had heard that the Timbisha



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had been high-handedly evicted from the oasis years ago. Among the irregularly spaced mobile homes of the Timbisha village I found the one belonging to the tribal chairman, Pauline Esteves, a dour, heavysset woman in her seventies. After many questions about who I was and what I wanted to know, she reluctantly agreed to talk to me. Sitting with her head in her hands at her dining-room table, she said that people who write about her almost always get everything wrong. To my questions about Timbisha history she responded first by staring back at me, irritatedly and long.

She said that the Timbisha people had lived here for thousands of years; that they had been the first to use the natural springs at Furnace Creek to cultivate the land; that a mining company had dispossessed them and bulldozed their houses in the 1920s; that the golf course was near where her house used to be; that despite such incursions the Timbisha had never left and didn't intend to leave. She added that they found the name Death Valley insulting. I asked about a local landmark, and what the Timbisha name for it had been. She buried her face in her hands for a while in silence. Then she looked at me and said, "Impossible to translate." She said that the tribe had been working for decades to get their land back but that she doubted they ever would. (A few weeks after I talked to her, I saw in the paper that the federal government had agreed to return 300 acres of land at Furnace Creek oasis to the Timbisha, along with about 7,200 acres outside the park. Congress has yet to approve the plan: I have a feeling that Pauline Esteves will believe it when she sees it.)

In the evenings I sat in my motel room and listened to the whirring of the lawn sprinklers on the golf course and read a book called *Desert Shadows: A True Story of the Charles Manson Family in Death Valley*, by Bob Murphy, which I had bought in a little museum in a nearby town. The woman minding the museum had said it was an interesting book, and it is. When I got to the end of it, I went back to the beginning and read parts over again. Somehow I was in a mood to think about Charles Manson. Manson was arrested—in Death Valley, as it happened—thirty years ago last October. He and his followers roamed all over this desert back then, on foot and in chopped Volkswagen dune buggies, and they used it for a hideout. At the time of his arrest Manson was wanted

only for auto theft and for torching an earthmover belonging to the Park Service; his involvement in the famous murders in L.A. came out afterward.

Desert Shadows says that Manson was captured at a cabin on the Barker ranch, his remote hideaway in an isolated part of Death Valley, up a canyon called Goler Wash. The book describes how difficult it is to drive or even hike up the canyon, and refers to it as "treacherous" Goler Wash. I considered: would I like to see a place like that—the desert hideout of a deranged killer? I decided that, all in all, I would not. Then I thought about it some more and decided that I actually would.

I SPENT a day driving and asking around to locate Goler Wash, which is in the Panamint Range in the park's southwestern corner. Early one morning I drove to the ghost town of Ballarat, and then continued south about sixteen miles on a road of gravel and sand to the foot of Goler Wash. I left my car, took a daypack with sandwiches and sunblock and water, and started up the canyon.

You might miss the entrance if you didn't know it was there: from a distance the canyon looks like just another seam in the mountain front. But within fifty yards high walls rise up to enclose a passage about the width of two cars, and the way winds between the walls like a narrow street in lower Manhattan. Grayish dawn light showed the canyon as I ascended; though the time was past sunrise, the sun would not get there for a while. This was the sort of place that needs the accompaniment of foreboding minor chords on a bass viol. But when I stopped and listened, I heard not a sound. As I went on, the stones clicking under my feet at a steep part seemed indiscreetly loud.

After about a mile the canyon opened out, and I could see farther. The sun lit the top of one ridge, and then slid to the next. I passed greenery—mesquite trees, scrubby willows—and thumb-shaped cacti poking from the canyon walls. In the crook of a switchback was a spring, upwelling and dark-tinted among creepers and weeds. After another few miles the day became hot. The sun, now overhead, filled the widened canyon with a fierce brightness unmarred by any shade. The silence remained vast. A raven glided over a ridge, and I thought of the Manson family members, some of them young women with babies, hiking up this track

barefoot back in 1969. Then I began to think about 1969 in general, and what an unhinged year it was, and how the insane expression in Charles Manson's eyes in that photograph of him on the cover of *Life* magazine seemed an apt image for that time. I had begun to give myself the creeps when I was distracted by the sound of an engine, and then by the sight of a bright-red ATV coming up the road. It stopped beside me, and its window rolled down. In it were Scott and Marv, businessmen from suburban Chicago, who were tooling around the desert in Marv's high-tech, diesel-powered, tanklike, very expensive Hummer while their wives played blackjack in Vegas. They were looking for Manson's hideout too. They had read about it in a guidebook. They offered me a ride, and I hopped in.

Marv was dark and stocky, Scott blond and thinner. Scott was driving. Each was smoking a big cigar. Scott said he especially wanted to find Manson's bus, which their guidebook also mentioned. In 1968 Manson drove the family's green-and-white school bus up to the Barker ranch, in what was perhaps the only noncriminal real achievement of his life. According to the guidebook, the bus was still there. As Scott negotiated the road's dicey parts, occasionally adjusting a control on the dash in order to add extra air to the Hummer's tires and raise the vehicle's underside an inch or two over the high spots, he kept saying, "I can't believe he got a school bus up here!" At a vista point with desert waste stretching beyond, Scott said, "Marv, when I look at scenery like this, I feel small." Marv puffed his cigar and said, "Drive, Scott. Just drive."

Marv told me about his glass-and-mirror company, and how it had installed the mirrors in the Chicago-area mansion of the basketball star Michael Jordan. As the throbbing Hummer motored upward, Scott kept saying, "The Hummer loves this, Marv. He loves this place."

The Barker ranch is on a tributary canyon that joins Goler Wash from the south. We took a couple of wrong canyons before we found it. Then we passed another spring, hung a right, squeezed through a narrow defile and under a low-hanging cottonwood, and there was the Barker cabin. The cabin where Charles Manson and his followers were captured is a trim one-story structure of local stone set against a low hillside and surrounded by willows, cottonwoods, and a pome-

Gingerly, I went through the cabin a second time. Its dimensions—of win-

The Park Service or someone has provided the cabin with a guest book. It was nearly full, with entries dating from several years to just a few days before. Being in the cabin made me jumpy, so I took the

book outside and read it sitting on the edge of the porch, in the shade. Entries from polite Europeans with good handwriting complimenting us Americans on our magnificent scenery alternated with all-capital-letter scrawls from apparent fans of Manson: "HELTER SKELTER DUDE! WELL HERE'S TO ANOTHER YEAR OF KILLIN'!" There were ballpoint sketches of Manson, and mystifying symbols, and obscure references to the date of his arrest; a ranger at Park Service headquarters had told me that members of the Manson family come back to the cabin sometimes. As I was reading a comment signed by someone named Feral Jenny, suddenly I heard what sounded like a scream from the hillside above. I don't know what it could have been—a coyote or a wild burro, maybe. Unobtrusively I stood up to see where the sound had come from. I looked all around, but I saw nothing besides a dilapidated fence at the edge of the property, some weeds along it, some tire tracks in the dirt dwindling away, the bare and hot hillsides, and over all a bright-blue western sky of endless, careless possibility. ☀

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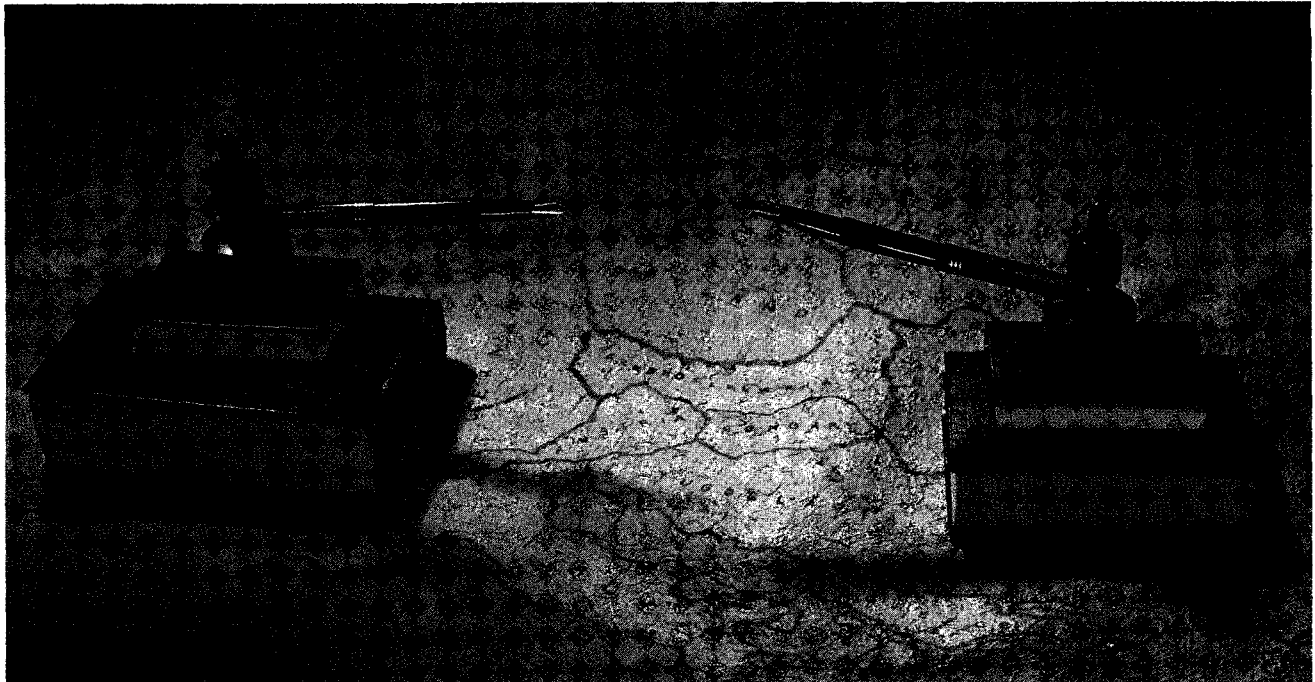
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The Holocaust on Trial

by D. D. GUTTENPLAN



A controversial British writer, David Irving, has instigated a libel suit against an American historian for calling him “one of the most dangerous spokespersons for Holocaust denial.” The trial, just beginning in Britain, will almost inevitably be used by some to claim legitimacy for Holocaust “revisionism”—as if the Holocaust as a historical fact were open to debate

“FIRST they came for the Jews . . .” Of all the “lessons” of the Holocaust, Pastor Martin Niemöller’s unsparing account of his own complicity in the escalating brutality of life in Nazi Germany is probably the best known. When Americans talk about the Holocaust—from Vice President Al Gore speaking at a Holocaust remembrance ceremony in Washington, D.C., to the AIDS activist Mary Fisher at the 1992 Republican Con-

vention—Niemöller’s litany of indifference, “but I was not a Jew. . .,” almost always comes up. It is one of the things everybody knows about the Holocaust, along with the bars of soap made from the fat of murdered Jews, and the gas chambers at Dachau and Belsen.

The problem is, what everybody knows about the Holocaust isn’t always true. Although the grisly tale of human beings rendered into soap figured in some of the earliest ac-

counts of events inside Nazi-occupied Europe, it is now universally rejected by historians as a fabrication—similar to the atrocity stories that were a staple of Allied propaganda during the First World War. The concentration camp at Dachau did have a gas chamber, but it was never used. There were no gas chambers at Belsen.

Nor, as it happens, did the Nazis come first for the Jews. In fact, as Peter Novick explains in his brilliant and provocative new book, *The Holocaust in American Life*, “First they came for the Communists”—a circumstance acknowledged by Niemöller, who continued,

but I was not a Communist—so I said nothing. Then they came for the Social Democrats, but I was not a Social Democrat—so I did nothing. Then came the trade unionists, but I was not a trade unionist. And then they came for the Jews, but I was not a Jew—so I did little. Then when they came for me, there was no one left who could stand up for me.

Novick describes Gore, Fisher, and the Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C., as “prudently omitting Communists” from their versions of Niemöller’s homily. But as Novick makes clear, prudence and political calculation have influenced our knowledge of the Holocaust from the very beginning.

Even the word itself—from the Greek *holos*, for “whole,” and *kaustos*, for “burnt”—is contested. In some circles the Hebrew word *Shoah*, meaning “destruction,” is preferred. The Princeton historian Arno Mayer coined the term “Judeocide” to describe the subject of his controversial study *Why Did the Heavens Not Darken?* (1988).

For a long time after the war the fate of European Jewry was hardly mentioned, partly because, as the cartoonist Art Spiegelman’s father says in *Maus*, his “survivor’s tale” in cartoon format, “No one wants anyway to hear such stories,” and partly because in the camps liberated by American GIs—Dachau and Buchenwald, for example—only about a fifth of the prisoners were Jews. In Edward R. Murrow’s famous 1945 broadcast from Buchenwald the words “Jew” and “Jewish” are never spoken. Deborah Lipstadt, the author of *Beyond Belief* (1986), a study of American press coverage of the Holocaust at the time, says that even when confronted by the evidence, many correspondents were reluctant to admit “to themselves—and to their readers” the reality of genocide. Lipstadt attributes a portion of this reluctance to anti-Semitism.

Novick, who teaches history at the University of Chicago, suggests a different reason for postwar American reticence: with the realignment brought about by the Cold War, talk of the Holocaust was positively inimical to U.S. interests. “In 1945,” he writes, “Americans had cheered as Soviet forces pounded Berlin into rubble; in 1948, Americans organized the Airlift to defend ‘gallant Berliners’ from Soviet threat.” The accompanying ideological retooling took place at breathtaking speed, but in 1950s America few besides Communists shouted, “Remember the six million!” For most Americans, including American Jews, the Holocaust was “the wrong

atrocious”—mention of it was at best an embarrassment, at worst a cause for suspicion.

Today the Holocaust is ubiquitous. Films such as *Schindler’s List* and *Sophie’s Choice*, television programs, novels, memoirs, and works of history all add to the sum of what we know—or think we know—about what Raul Hilberg, the pre-eminent scholar in the field, called “The Destruction of the European Jews.” Hilberg’s opus by that title was first published in 1961, but only after having been sat on by academic presses at Columbia and the University of Oklahoma, and rejected outright by Princeton, and only after a Czech refugee donated \$15,000 toward the cost of publication. The first reviews were mostly hostile, and it would be years before Hilberg won any prizes.

We need merely consider the reception of Benjamin Wilkomirski’s *Fragments* (1995) to see how much has changed. Decorated with endorsements by famous academics, *Fragments* won the National Jewish Book Award for autobiography/memoir, beating out works by Elie Wiesel and Alfred Kazin. Even after evidence mounted that “Wilkomirski” was really Bruno Dössekker, a Swiss musician whose account of a childhood in the concentration camps is completely fictional, *Fragments* continued to attract readers. Such is the public appetite for Holocaust literature.

How did this change come about? Peter Novick mentions various factors: a gradual easing of the Cold War, outbreaks of neo-Nazism in Germany and the United States, the 1952 publication of *Anne Frank: The Diary of A Young Girl*, later adapted to stage and screen. But the single greatest catalyst, he says, was the kidnapping and trial of the Nazi war criminal Adolf Eichmann. Here, too, much of the initial response was negative: *The New Republic* said that Israel should “confess error and hand Eichmann back” to Argentina. *The Wall Street Journal* worried that the proceedings would only benefit the Russians. But as the trial wore on, the sheer mass of detail evidently overcame such skepticism. The trial was televised, and for the first time the American public was confronted with the Holocaust as an event distinct from the general carnage of war. The controversy over Hannah Arendt’s *Eichmann in Jerusalem* (1963)—Arendt’s focus on Eichmann’s ordinariness, on what she called “the banality of evil,” struck some commentators as overly sympathetic—further piqued public interest.

Now, nearly forty years after Eichmann’s capture, the Holocaust is once again on trial. This time the venue is London, Courtroom 37 of the Royal Courts of Justice, where for the next few months Charles Gray, a judge of the Queen’s Bench, will preside over the matter of *David Irving v. Penguin Books Ltd. and Deborah Lipstadt*. To Irving, the author of numerous books on the Third Reich, the Holocaust is “an ill-fitting legend.” Irving doesn’t deny that many Jews died. Instead he denies that any of them were killed in gas chambers, that Hitler directly ordered the annihilation of European Jewry, and that the killings were in any significant way different from the other atrocities of the Second World War. Of course, many

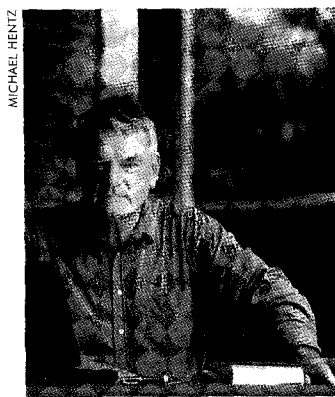
right-wing cranks have argued along similar lines. What makes Irving different is that his views on the Holocaust appear in the context of work that has been respected, even admired, by some of the leading historians in Britain and the United States.

In her book *Denying the Holocaust* (1993), Deborah Lipstadt argues that it is precisely Irving's considerable reputation that makes him "one of the most dangerous spokespersons for Holocaust denial." "Familiar with historical evidence," she writes, "he bends it until it conforms with his ideological leanings and political agenda."

Irving claims that those words are libelous. He cheerfully admits to having said "There were never any gas chambers at Auschwitz" and "The structures which you can now see as a tourist at Auschwitz were erected by the authorities in Poland after World War Two" and are "a fake." That doesn't make him a Holocaust denier, he argues, because his comments "are true." In effect Irving is seeking to put not just Lipstadt but the Holocaust itself on trial—an effort in which he will receive considerable help from British libel law.

In the United States the burden of proof in a libel case is on the plaintiff—and in an American trial, Irving, as a public figure, would have to prove not just that Lipstadt's criticisms were untrue but also that they were made with "knowledge of falsity or with reckless disregard" of the truth. In Britain the burden of proof is on the defendant. It will not be enough for Lipstadt to point out that even historians who "always learn something from" Irving—among them Gordon Craig, of Stanford, who pays tribute to Irving's "energy as a researcher and to the scope and vigor of his publications"—find his views on the Holocaust, in Craig's words, "obtuse and quickly discredited." Lipstadt will actually have to discredit them. She will also have to show that the evidence is so clear-cut that only a willful misreading or conscious distortion of the facts could account for Irving's positions. This will not be easy.

The problem is not a lack of evidence. The destruction of European Jewry was, in Hilberg's central insight, essentially a bureaucratic process, the result of "a series of administrative measures." In their pursuit of the *Endlösung*—the Final Solution to the Jewish question—the Nazis left all the detritus of



David Irving



Deborah Lipstadt

any large organization: memoranda, requisition forms, purchase orders, files, and blueprints. Approximately one million Jews were murdered at Auschwitz, for example, and all of them had to be taken there by train from somewhere else, in the middle of a war in which the railways were the lifelines of the German army. The gas to kill them—Zyklon B—had to be paid for. And the ovens that disposed of the bodies had to be specially built—by Topf and Sons, a German firm that patented the design. Finally, for each *Stück*—"piece," as the

Nazis referred to a Jew—processed, certain items had to be accounted for: money, jewelry, personal effects, dental gold, hair.

Hilberg's mapping of this bureaucracy fills three volumes, but the essential facts of the Holocaust are contained in a series of tables at the end. "Deaths by Cause," for example, shows that more than 800,000 Jews died as a result of "ghettoization and general privation," more than 1.3 million were killed by "open-air shootings," and up to three million were murdered in camps—as many as 2.7 million of these in death camps: specialized extermination centers such as Sobibór, Treblinka, and Belzec. By comparison, 150,000 died in other camps, including concentration camps such as Dachau and Buchenwald. In "Deaths by Country," Hilberg's list ranges from the up to three million Jews of Poland to the fewer than 1,000 from Luxembourg,

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and in "Deaths by Year" he charts the genocide's rise and fall. But in all three tables the total is the same: 5.1 million Jews.

Other historians dispute Hilberg's arithmetic, arguing for a figure closer to six million. Scholars also remain divided on exactly when and why the Nazis shifted from a policy of encouraging Jewish emigration (which saved half of Germany's Jews) to a policy of extermination (which murdered perhaps 90 percent of Greece's Jews). And they argue about the role of the camps in the German economy. David Irving uses these divisions—just as he uses ambiguities about the Auschwitz complex, where factories run by Siemens and Krupp, an IG

Farben plant for making synthetic rubber, and several coal mines all co-existed with Birkenau, a highly specialized killing center where nearly a million people were gassed to death. But his argument is something different.

What David Irving actually believes about the Holocaust remains mysterious. He can appear the soul of reason, eager to concede common ground to his adversaries. "I'm not going to dispute most of what they say about the Holocaust," he told me recently, "most of which—or ninety percent of which—I agree with wholeheartedly." But he has also referred to "the absurd legends" of the Holocaust, especially the "myth" of the gas chambers, as a "blood libel on the German people." Irving claims that Hilberg's arithmetic is not just mistaken but off by an order of magnitude, and that Jewish victims of the Nazis number in the hundreds of thousands, not millions. He is, as he told a BBC interviewer, "a gas-chamber denier." Finally, he dismisses evidence refuting his claims as postwar fabrication.

Irving's arguments have a quicksilver quality, and over time he has occupied a number of contradictory positions. But his aim is consistent: "Cutting the Holocaust down to its true size," he said on Australian television in 1996, "makes it comparable with the other crimes of World War Two."

To Deborah Lipstadt, David Irving is "an ardent admirer" of Adolf Hitler who skews documents and misrepresents data "to reach historically untenable conclusions." The sum of his arguments, she says, equals Holocaust denial—a position that in her view has no more credibility than the claim that the earth is flat. To Irving the label "Holocaust denier" is itself libelous, a tool to silence his inconvenient truths. The two sides have agreed that the issues involved are too complex, the questions of evidence and interpretation too subtle, to be argued in front of a jury. Instead it will be up to Judge Charles Gray to decide who is telling the truth. But the whole world will be watching.

The "Scamp"

DAVID John Cawdell Irving was born on March 24, 1938, the youngest of four children. His father was a naval officer, and in some interviews Irving strives to give an impression of Country Life. "My mother," he says, "was an artist." Then he catches himself. "A commercial artist. She did pen-and-ink drawings for *Nursery World*." For an Englishman with Irving's keen sense of social distinctions, the difference is considerable. The Irvings lived in Ongar, "the end of the Central Line," a dreary suburb made drearier by a lack of money.

When Irving was four years old, his father's ship, the HMS *Edinburgh*, was torpedoed by the Germans. His father survived, but never returned to his wife and family. "I saw my father about twice in my whole life," Irving says. "During the war years we had a motorcar which was up on blocks. It was a Ford, and I remember as a child climbing through the door. Underneath the car I found a battered old board suitcase, which my mother had obviously thrown there, and it was full

of a very musty naval uniform, which was beginning to rot."

The war dominated Irving's childhood. "I remember standing on the beach at Southsea," he says, "and watching the invasion fleet sail in June, 1944. My mother said that most of them probably wouldn't be coming home." Sent as a day boy to "a minor public school," Irving was "beaten repeatedly." He says, "The final beating came when I'd hung a twelve-foot hammer-and-sickle flag over the main entrance to the school. They had to call the fire brigade to come and bring it down. . . . I was a scamp."

A year earlier Irving had won the school prize for art appreciation. The award was a book of his choice—to be presented by the deputy prime minister. "I filled in the form saying the prize I wanted to receive was *Mein Kampf*. I arranged for the local press to be there en masse to take a photograph of the deputy prime minister giving me a copy of *Mein Kampf*. I went up on stage and picked up this prize—and it was a German-Russian technical dictionary! I've never read *Mein Kampf* from that day to this."

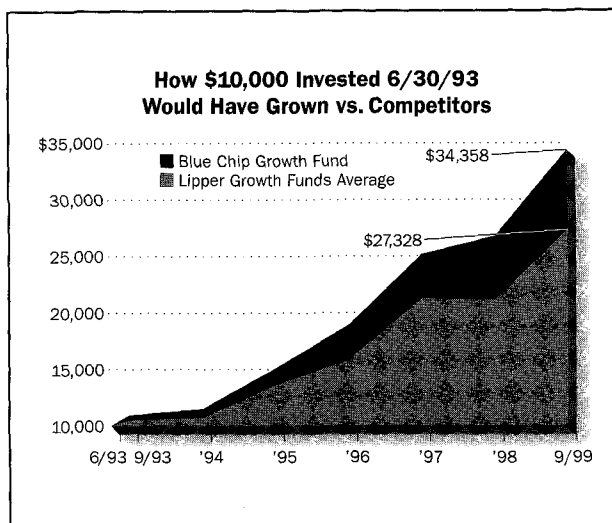
Irving's desire to shock also got him into trouble at Imperial College, where he'd been given a one-year scholarship. The student magazine "ran a headline in 1956 that I'd said that seventeen percent of London university students were extreme left-wing or Communists," he says. "The figure of seventeen percent was straight off the top of my head. I just picked a prime number." Irving lost his scholarship after failing his math examination—a failure for which he blames his professor, "a known Communist."

To finance his second year of studies, Irving took a job on a concrete gang. He also became fascinated with Oswald Mosley, the former head of the British Union of Fascists, who was running for Parliament. An attempt to join the Royal Air Force was turned down on medical grounds. If Mosley was an odd inspiration for the son of a Second World War veteran, Irving's response to his rejection by the RAF was odder still. He wrote a letter to Krupp, the former Nazi armaments manufacturer, asking for a job in its steel mill. Seized by the Allies after the war, the firm was unable to oblige. But its rival Thyssen, whose owners had fallen out with Hitler after helping him to power, offered Irving a year's work. His fellow steelworkers added a rough-hewn fluency to Irving's high school German; one of them, a native of Dresden, gave him the subject of his first book.

The man had lived through the Allied fire-bombing of the city in February of 1945; his harrowing account of the raid came as a revelation to Irving, who set to work interviewing survivors and combing through German and Allied archival material. Published in 1963, *The Destruction of Dresden* was an immediate best seller. The book's gruesome photographs of Germans burning their dead, which Irving secured from one of his new contacts, ensured maximum press attention for his claim that the bombing raid had killed 135,000 people—a figure that was more than twice the official estimates.

"I imported Dresden into the vocabulary of horror," Irving

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says proudly. "People now say 'Dresden' in the same breath as they say 'Auschwitz' and 'Hiroshima.' That's my small contribution to the vernacular."

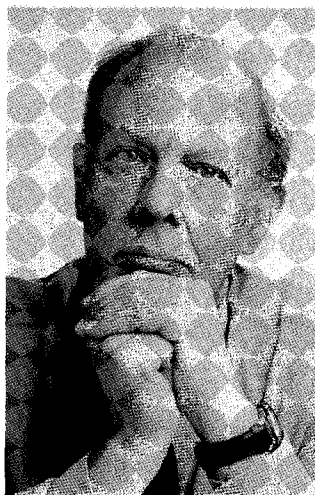
In later years Irving's estimates of the Dresden death toll would fall as low as 35,000 and rise as high as 250,000. And in later years he would sometimes make direct comparisons between Dresden and Auschwitz. "About a hundred thousand people died in Auschwitz," he told an interviewer in 1991. "So even if we're generous and say one quarter of them, twenty-five thousand, were killed by hanging or shooting—twenty-five thousand is a crime, that's true. . . . But we killed that many people burning them alive in one night, not in three years, in a city like Pforzheim. We killed five times that number in Dresden in one night."

At the time, however, *The Destruction of Dresden* was important to Irving for other reasons. The book's financial success allowed him to abandon efforts to complete his degree. He immediately began work on two more books: a history of the German rocket program and a biography of Adolf Hitler. "I'd translated the memoirs of [Field Marshal] Wilhelm Keitel, who was hanged at Nuremberg," Irving says. "Keitel's son introduced me to Otto Günsche—the man who burned Hitler's body. He was Hitler's SS adjutant. And Günsche decided he would talk to me, because I was the Englishman who had written about Dresden. That gave me an edge."

Günsche became Irving's passport into "the inner circle of all Hitler devotees, the servants and the adjutants and the colonels and the secondaries, who would meet around the graveside when one of their number died," he says. "And the word was passed: 'He's okay.' And after a while they started producing their diaries and private papers." The result was *Hitler's War*, published in 1977.

Writing in *Time* magazine, Lance Morrow found Irving's portrait of "the Führer as a somewhat harried business execu-

**AS PETER NOVICK
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AND TRIAL OF
ADOLF EICHMANN.**



Peter Novick

called *Hitler's War* Irving's "greatest achievement . . . indispensable to anyone seeking to understand the war in the round." Fueled by such notices, the book reached No. 8 on British best-seller lists.

The only appreciable dent in Irving's public credibility came when the writer Gitta Sereny and the reporter Lewis Chester checked Irving's documents and re-interviewed his sources, including Otto Günsche, on assignment for the *Sunday Times*. Less than the sum of its parts, their article contained some damaging details—among them Günsche's admission that "one must assume that [Hitler] did know" about the extermination of the Jews—but ultimately posed little obstacle to Irving's continued prominence.

One reason for this was the authors' focus on the narrow question of Hitler's personal culpability—doubtless a response to Irving's much-publicized standing offer of \$1,000 to anyone who could provide documentary evidence of Hitler's guilt. And because Sereny is a fellow writer on Nazi themes, Irving could—and does—simply dismiss her as a jealous competitor. Finally, and perhaps most important, although his account of Hitler's role was hard to swallow (not even Keegan and Trevor-Roper took his behind-Hitler's-back thesis seriously), in 1977 David Irving's views on the Holocaust were fairly unexceptionable. Under "Jews: extermination of," the index to *Hitler's War* lists seventeen entries. There are references to "the extermination camp at Chelmno" and "the extermination center at Treblinka." And Irving's argument that "the burden of guilt for the bloody and mindless massacre of the Jews rests on a large number of Germans, many of them alive today, and not just on one 'mad dictator,' whose order had to be obeyed without question," while debatable, is not very far from the thesis of Daniel Goldhagen's *Hitler's Willing Executioners* (1996), another book whose dismissal by knowledgeable specialists has done little to hinder its success with the public.

Any damage to Irving's reputation was more than recouped by his involvement in the 1983 debacle over the "Hitler di-

tive, too preoccupied to know exactly what was happening in his branch offices at Auschwitz and Treblinka," difficult to credit. The historian Hugh Trevor-Roper's review in the London *Sunday Times* referred to Irving's "consistent bias" but went on to say, "No praise can be too high for Irving's indefatigable scholarly industry. . . . I have enjoyed reading his long work from beginning to end." The military historian John Keegan

aries,” when *Newsweek*, the London *Sunday Times*, and the German magazine *Der Stern*, which had rushed to publish the diaries in a fanfare of publicity, were forced to admit they’d been conned—or, in the case of *Newsweek*, which sidestepped the question of the diaries’ authenticity, at least deeply embarrassed. Chief among the victims was Hugh Trevor-Roper, ennobled as Lord Dacre, who had authenticated the volumes for the *Times*. Irving crashed *Der Stern*’s April, 1983, Hamburg press conference; his comments casting doubt on the diaries’ provenance were repeated on the *Today* show. It was his finest hour, recalled with glee by his defenders—most recently Christopher Hitchens, in *Vanity Fair*, who cited the incident in support of his view that “David Irving is not just a Fascist historian. He is also a great historian of Fascism.”

A gratifying example of the amateur besting the academic, this account, which turns up in most profiles of Irving, omits a few details. For one thing, it was Irving who first approached the *Times* in 1982 with an offer to go to Germany and inspect the diaries for the paper. And although he did denounce the diaries at *Der Stern*’s press conference, so did Trevor-Roper. A week later Irving changed his mind—a dizzying sequence that shed little light on the fake diaries but generated a great deal of publicity for his *The Secret Diaries of Hitler’s Doctor*, an anodyne collection of notes by the Führer’s physician, Theodor Morell, which just happened to be published that week.

Whatever his merits as a historian, as a self-publicist Irving has few peers. Journalists across the political spectrum testify to his unfailing helpfulness, his willingness to make archives, clipping files, and documents available without preconditions. On two occasions I have been left alone in Irving’s study for more than an hour. If Irving has anything to hide, it is hidden in plain sight.

The Defendant

DEBORAH Lipstadt has a bad back. Her condition, she knows, hasn’t been helped by the amount of time she’s had to spend sleeping on airplanes between her home in Atlanta, where she is the Dorot Professor of Modern Jewish and Holocaust Studies at Emory University, and her lawyer’s office in London. But as we sit talking in the coffee shop attached to her London hotel, she also gives the impression of being metaphysically wrenched out of her orbit.

“I’d much rather be hanging out in the fall foliage in Georgia, hiking the Appalachian trail,” she says. The author of two books, and a veteran of hundreds of interviews and dozens of television appearances, Lipstadt is perfectly at ease with the press, slipping on and off the record with the agility of a politician. A large woman with reddish-brown hair, strong features, and a gravelly New Yorker’s voice (think Bette Midler rather than Bess Myerson), she describes herself as “always fighting.” She says, “I’m a great dinner-party guest if you want a lively dinner party. If you want peace and quiet, don’t invite me.”

But *Irving v. Lipstadt* is no dinner party, and Lipstadt is

not in London to see the sights. “Hello! I’m the defendant here,” she says. “If I hadn’t fought this, he would have won by default. He could have said—it would have been said—the High Court in London recognizes his definition of the Holocaust. Now, some people would say, ‘Oh, that’s ludicrous. Who would believe that anyway?’ But it’s naive to think you can just say, ‘I’m going to ignore this.’”

Deborah Lipstadt was not brought up to be naive—or to walk away from a fight. Her father came to the United States from Germany in the 1920s. “Because of the economic situation—nothing to do with anti-Semitism,” she offers before being asked. Her mother was born in Canada. Lipstadt herself was born in Manhattan, in 1947, but the family moved to Queens soon afterward. “I went to Jewish day schools there,” she says, “and got an intensive Jewish education, both at home and in school.”

The Lipstadts considered themselves “modern Orthodox”—partly to distinguish themselves from the black-hatted, caftan-wearing Hasidim, and partly to signify that although they observed Jewish dietary laws and regulated their lives by the Hebrew rather than the secular calendar, they did not set their faces against modern life. “We were very much of this world,” Lipstadt says. “Theater, opera, books, journals, museums.”

Lipstadt grew up in a mixed neighborhood, but her interactions with non-Jews were limited. “When you’re an observant family, you go to day schools, you keep kosher—just technically you march to the beat of a different drummer,” she says. Class may also have been a factor. The comfortable, parochial, culturally voracious, slightly smug yet socially conscious world of German Jews is difficult to convey to outsiders, though the fiction of Isaac Bashevis Singer provides a wry introduction.

After her family moved back to Manhattan, in the mid-1960s, Lipstadt says, Singer lived next door. But she is just as proud of the fact that the civil-rights worker Andy Goodman’s family also lived on her street. When Goodman’s body was found in Mississippi, along with those of his murdered comrades, James Chaney and Michael Schwerner, Lipstadt’s father, who had a small headstone business, was commissioned to make his monument. “In the summer of the freedom rides,” Lipstadt says, “I was too young to go down to the South, but I knew that if I had been older, I would have. I remember going with my mother—this was 1964 or 1965—up to Harlem on a Sunday to participate in a march. It was my mother’s idea.”

At City College, Lipstadt says ruefully, she was part of “the last generation where you could get a really good education.” She majored in political science and history, spending her junior year in Israel. “I took a couple of courses on the Holocaust, met more survivors than I’d met before,” she says. “Though I’d met survivors growing up, I didn’t know they were survivors. My parents had lots of German Jewish friends, but I didn’t know them as survivors, I just knew them as the Peisers or the Ullmans.”

Just as the academic year was ending, the Six-Day War

broke out. Lipstadt decided to remain in Israel another year: "If I'd been there in June of '67, to go home in July '67 made no sense." When she returned to America, she enrolled in the graduate program in Judaic studies at Brandeis. Her priorities were shifting.

"I remember showing up at the synagogue my parents went to on the Upper West Side," she says, "wearing my SNCC [Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee] button, and somebody yelling at me, 'They're leftists, anti-Semites, and terrible people!' I went berserk!"

Like many other Jews of her generation, Lipstadt felt herself pushed from civil rights to Jewish causes by the bitter 1968 struggle between the mostly black parents of Ocean Hill and Brownsville in Brooklyn and the largely Jewish teachers' union over community control of the schools. Neither side had a monopoly on racism—and there were Jews on both sides of the picket lines once the union went out on strike rather than cede power to the parents. But what Lipstadt saw was "overt anti-Semitism coming from people whose struggle you had always thought . . . cut to the core of America."

Despite her upbringing, Lipstadt describes herself as "not Orthodox." The exclusion of even the mention of women from so much of Orthodox ritual disturbs her. "I want them to at least acknowledge that you're only talking about the men. Because if the rabbi stands up and says, 'We need as many people as possible to come tomorrow morning,' I'll come."

But her discomfort with organized religion—"I'm equally unhappy in any synagogue I go to," she says, half joking—does not extend to estrangement from organized Judaism. "So much of my personal life is tied up with being Jewish. Being a Jew and being Jewish, culturally, religiously, intellectually—it's what I know best."

"A Paper Eichmann"

WHEN David Irving and Deborah Lipstadt come face to face in a London courtroom, it will not be their first meeting. That took place in November of 1994, in Atlanta, when Irving turned up at a talk Lipstadt was giving on the danger of legitimizing Holocaust deniers as "the other side" in some historical debate—a theme of *Denying the Holocaust*, which had been published the previous year. Irving described the encounter in his diary, which he later posted on his Web site.

I then politely put up my hand. Invited to speak, I boomed in my very English, very loud voice to her: "Professor Lipstadt, I am right in believing you are not a historian, you are a professor of religion?" She answered that she was a professor of religion but (something special else) in history too. I then waded in with verbal fists flying: "I am the David Irving to whom you have made such disparaging reference in your speech. . . ."

THESE DAYS

Days when it's easy, the water
seems wonderfully clear, not a
chance of drowning. Objects

appear so close that you need only
reach down for them into coolness
until the word offers up:

as though you could shape thought with
your thumb. Around you the air
blossoms with names for itself.

The noise of the waves tearing
the shore apart blooms like
French horns, and the taste

of the self is very sweet. These days
it's easy to forget how
stubborn silence can be, how

rapidly glibness drains the mind of every
nutrient, what fanatic reinforcements
the armies of emptiness can bring forward.

These days every choice is clear, every
location opens at a touch to
yield its necessary

drop of honey, every word glows
with exactly the wanted
intensity of
tilt.

—PETER DAVISON

Brandishing a wad of \$20 bills, Irving repeated his standing offer. Lipstadt attempted to take other questions, but, in Irving's account, "several times I wagged the bundle of \$20 bills aloft, as she was speaking, and hissed: 'One thousand dollars. . . !'"

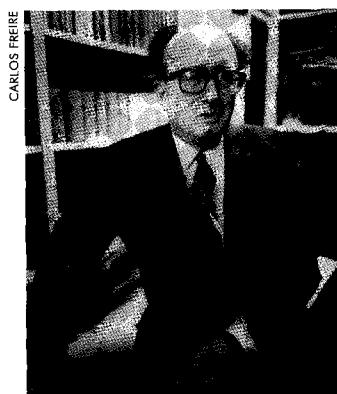
Irving's diary goes on to recount his success in giving away free copies of his books to the students in attendance, who duly lined up afterward for his autograph: "Sweet victory. Then students came to me with copies of the printed invitation to autograph: I did so—they were blank, which meant that either they had not asked Lipstadt for her autograph, or she would have to sign after me. Total Victory! Revenge!"

Three observations immediately suggest themselves: 1) by November of 1994 Irving was clearly aware that Lipstadt had repeatedly and publicly attacked his work; 2) *Denying the Holocaust* had come out in Britain in 1994, yet 3) far from seeming aggrieved or on the point of seeking redress in a court of law, Irving showed every sign of enjoying playing the "scamp" in his jousts with Lipstadt, and clearly felt that in this contest the advantage was his.

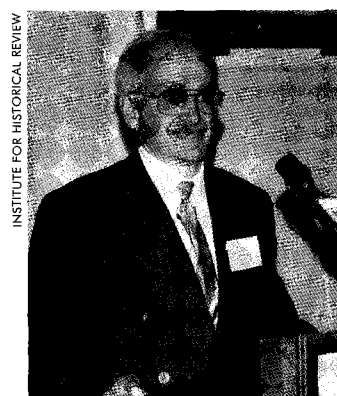
David Irving didn't file suit for libel until September of 1996. The previous spring St. Martin's Press had canceled the publication of his *Goebbels: Mastermind of the Third Reich*. Given Irving's history, available to anyone with a modem or a library card, a certain amount of controversy was to be expected, perhaps even courted. So when *Publishers Weekly* pronounced Irving's book "repellent," and Jewish organizations expressed outrage, and Deborah Lipstadt was quoted as saying that St. Martin's Press would hardly sign up the Louisiana white supremacist David Duke for a book on race relations, St. Martin's stood firm. For about two weeks.

Sometime between the March 22 *Daily News* report headlined "NAZI BIG'S BIO AUTHOR SPARKS UPROAR" and Frank Rich's April 3 *New York Times* column calling Irving "Hitler's Spin Artist," Irving's publishers lost their nerve and announced that they were shocked—shocked!—to discover that the book they were on the brink of shipping to stores had suddenly become unpublishable.

The principal effect of this decision, as Christopher



Pierre Vidal-Naquet



Robert Faurisson

Hitchens properly pointed out in a caustic résumé of the scandal in the June, 1996, *Vanity Fair*, was to transform a man with "depraved ideas" about the Holocaust into a poster boy for free speech. One ancillary effect was to lend the Goebbels book the cachet of suppressed literature. Another was to give rise to Gordon Craig's lofty declaration, in the course of a four-page review of the biography in *The New York Review of Books*, that "silencing Mr. Irving would be a high price to pay for freedom from the annoyance that he causes us."

FAURISSON'S CHIEF

ANTAGONIST,

THE CLASSICIST

PIERRE VIDAL-

NAQUET, FELT IT

WAS AS IMPORTANT

TO EXPOSE

FAURISSON'S DIS-

TORTIONS AS IT

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DISTORT. HE

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DISTORTIONS."

Craig continued, "The fact is that he knows more about National Socialism than most professional scholars in his field, and students of the years 1933–1945 owe more than they are always willing to admit" to his research. "Such people as David Irving . . . have an indispensable part in the historical enterprise, and we dare not disregard their views."

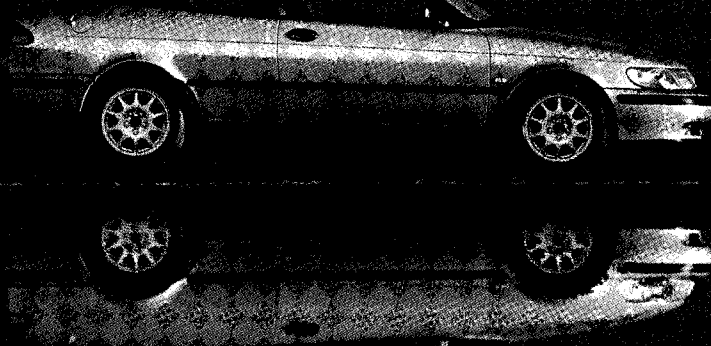
"We dare not." If Craig is right, then we are all—all of us with a stake in "the historical enterprise"—injured parties, deprived of Irving's unique contribution. But what if he's wrong? What if Irving's work is meretricious, sloppy, anti-Semitic, and dishonest? The question has a familiar ring.

In the late 1970s French intellectuals were convulsed over *l'affaire Faurisson*, which began when Robert Faurisson, a professor of literature at the University of Lyons, published an article in *Le Monde* proclaiming the "good news" that the gas chambers did not exist. "The alleged Hitlerian gas chambers," Faurisson said, "and the so-called genocide of the Jews form a single historical lie whose principal beneficiaries are the State of Israel and international Zionism and whose principal victims are the German people, but not its leaders, and the Palestinian people in its entirety."

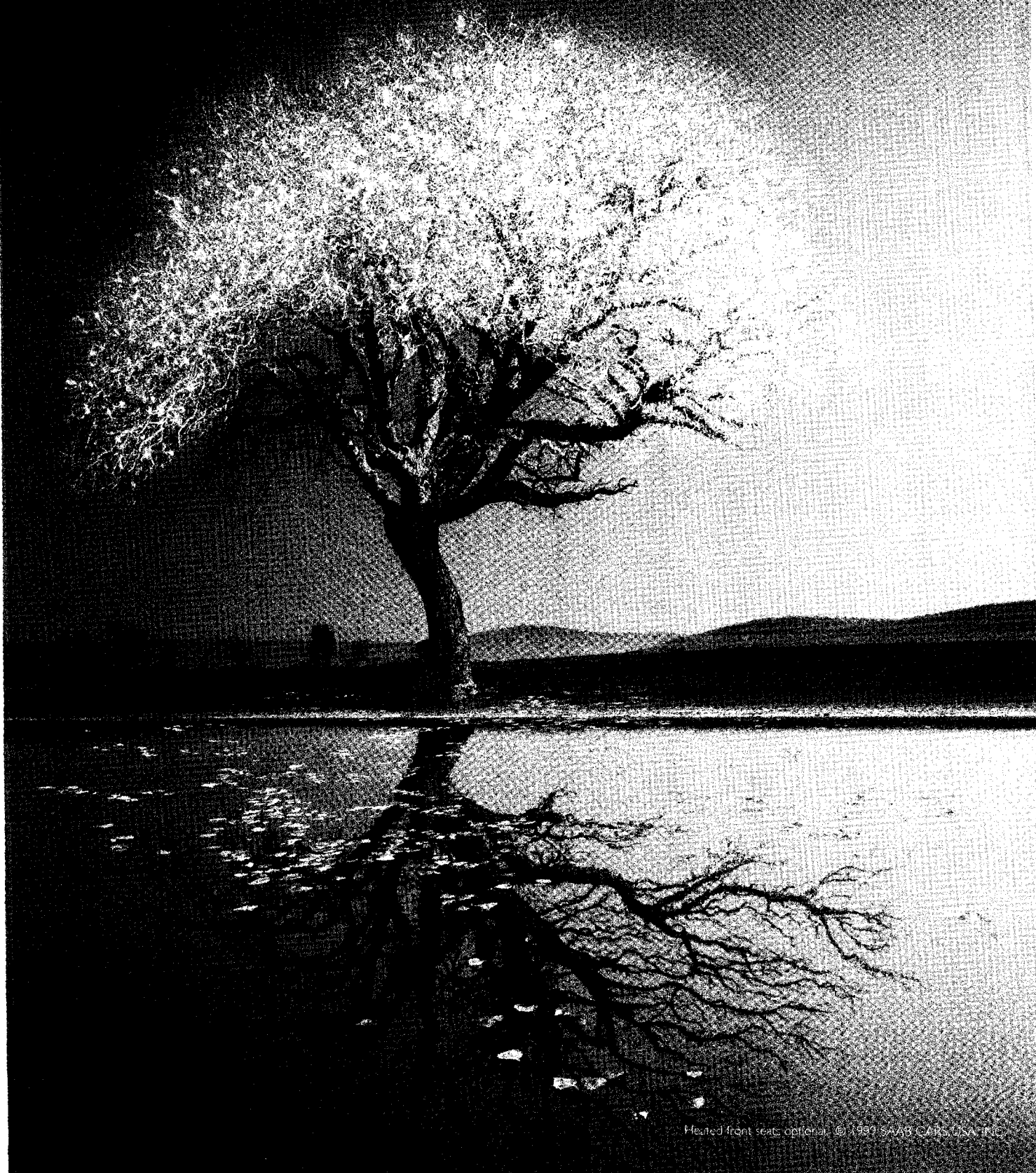
Faurisson's public supporters were found mostly on the far left of French politics—which is what gave the affair its frisson. When the linguist and political activist Noam Chomsky lent his name to campaigners defending Faurisson's freedom

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of expression, the controversy became a trans-Atlantic one.

There is, Christopher Hitchens once argued, “no obligation, in defending or asserting the right to speak, to pass any comment on the truth or merit of what may be, or is being, said.” Indeed, the suggestion of something rank about a speaker’s views, as Hitchens gently reminded Chomsky, merely gives those who would defend his right to speak “all the more reason not to speculate” about those views. Hitchens wrote those words fifteen years ago—about five years after he’d done me the first in a long string of kindnesses, still unbroken. So I take no pleasure in pointing out that his first mistake in *l’affaire Irving* was to ignore his own sound advice, by describing Irving as “a great historian of Fascism.”

His second mistake—and here he had lots of company—was to assume that what Irving really wanted was a debate with his critics. Because if that were Irving’s objective, all he would have had to do was bide his time. “Someone,” Hitchens asserted confidently, “will no doubt pick up where St. Martin’s left off.”

What Irving did instead was to sue Deborah Lipstadt and her publisher, Penguin Books, for libel in England (where Lipstadt’s costs will amount to hundreds of thousands of pounds even if she wins). At which point it became rather more difficult to defend the proposition that what was at stake was Irving’s freedom of speech.

It is one thing to argue that the cowardly reversal of St. Martin’s did more harm—to the cause of free debate and to public understanding of the Holocaust—than if St. Martin’s had simply published and let Irving be damned. It is another to maintain that any commercial publisher is under any obligation to publish Irving or anybody else.

The essential distinction—between the power of the state and the decisions of the market—can be pressed too far. And when Lipstadt argues, as she does in *Denying the Holocaust*, that “the main shortcoming of legal restraints is that they transform the deniers into martyrs,” she seems to be setting aside the state’s power to silence offending views on tactical grounds alone, rather than as a matter of principle. Faurisson’s chief antagonist, the French classicist Pierre Vidal-Naquet, took a different view: “To live with Faurisson? Any other attitude would imply that we were imposing historical truth as legal truth, which is a dangerous attitude available to other fields of application.”

A writer whose history of engagement extends from opposing his government’s use of torture in Algeria to support for the rights of Palestinians, Vidal-Naquet was in many ways Chomsky’s French counterpart. However, perhaps because both his parents had been deported by the Nazis (his mother died at Auschwitz), Vidal-Naquet felt it was just as important to expose Faurisson’s distortions as it was to support his right to distort. His skepticism about the role of the state finds no echo in Lipstadt—unlike his argument against “debating” the Holocaust.

Vidal-Naquet wrote,

Confronting an actual Eichmann, one had to resort to armed struggle and, if need be, to ruse. Confronting a paper Eichmann, one should respond with paper. . . . In so doing, we are not placing ourselves on the same ground as our enemy. We do not “debate” him; we demonstrate the mechanisms of his lies and falsifications, which may be methodologically useful for the younger generations.

We need only set this passage from *Assassins of Memory*, Vidal-Naquet’s elegant, restrained, yet devastating response to Faurisson, beside a similar passage from *Denying the Holocaust* to see the extent of Lipstadt’s indebtedness.

Not ignoring the deniers does not mean engaging them in discussion or debate. In fact, it means *not* doing that. We cannot debate them for two reasons, one strategic and the other tactical. As we have repeatedly seen, the deniers long to be considered the “other” side. Engaging them in discussion makes them exactly that. Second, they are contemptuous of the very tools that shape any honest debate: truth and reason. Debating them would be like trying to nail a glob of jelly to the wall.

“Like trying to nail a glob of jelly . . .” Though she relies on his arguments, Deborah Lipstadt is no Vidal-Naquet. She lacks his intellectual breadth, his clarity of thought and expression, and, most regrettably, his stature as a Jew who has never confined his political engagement to Jewish causes. Nevertheless, her book is an honest attempt to sound a warning about a phenomenon that Vidal-Naquet would be the first to agree deserves our attention.

Robert Faurisson, after all, was a nonentity, an obscure professor in a provincial university. David Irving is a celebrity—William Casey, the former director of the CIA, once wrote him a fan letter. Irving is also much, much cleverer than Faurisson.

“Not My Patch”

IRVING describes himself as a “revisionist,” a writer of “real history,” not a Holocaust denier. Not long ago he read me an account, from one of his lectures, of the brutal massacre of Jewish men, women, and children by the *Einsatzgruppen*—the security-police units who followed the German army into Poland. “How can they claim I deny the Holocaust?” Anyway, he said, he’s no expert on the Holocaust: “Not my patch.” Besides, the subject bores him.

It was as an expert on German documents and the Second World War that Irving flew to Toronto in 1988 to testify in the trial of Ernst Zündel. A German immigrant to Canada, Zündel supplemented his income as a commercial artist by distributing a selection of neo-Nazi and racist literature, including two works of his own: *UFOs: Nazi Secret Weapons* and *The Hitler We Loved and Why*. In 1983 Zündel had been charged with willfully publishing “false news” that was “likely to cause injury or mischief to a public interest.” Faurisson came from France to testify for the defense; Raul Hilberg testified for the

prosecution. Though Zündel was convicted and sentenced to fifteen months in prison, the conviction was overturned on appeal, and in the 1988 retrial the defense team added two reinforcements.

One was David Irving. The other was Fred Leuchter, who was billed as an engineer specializing in the design and operation of execution apparatus. Engaged by Faurisson on Zündel's behalf, Leuchter had flown to Poland with a cameraman, a draftsman, and a translator. The group spent three days at Auschwitz and Birkenau and one at Majdanek, chipping off bits of brick and concrete from a number of buildings. These "forensic samples," as Leuchter described them, were taken to a lab outside of Boston, where the technician was told that the material was from a workmen's-compensation case.

Under questioning by the Crown Counsel it emerged that Leuchter's engineering training consisted of a few undergraduate science courses. His "report" purporting to demonstrate the nonexistence of gas chambers, on which the defense had spent nearly \$50,000, was ruled inadmissible. Leuchter was allowed to give his opinion that it was "impossible" for the structures he had seen in Poland to have been used as gas chambers, that they "wouldn't have been efficient" and were "too dangerous," but the second jury was not convinced either. Zündel was again found guilty, though this conviction was overturned in 1992, when Canada's "false news" law was ruled unconstitutional.

Leuchter did acquire at least one convert. For David Irving, who followed him to the witness stand, Leuchter's account of his Polish field trip apparently struck with the force of a revelation. "My mind has now changed," he told the court, "... because I understand that the whole of the Holocaust mythology is, after all, open to doubt." Back in London, Irving's Focal Point Publications issued the results of Leuchter's amateur chemistry experiment as a sixty-six-page booklet—with an introduction by David Irving. Irving also removed all mention of

**WHATEVER WE
TALKED ABOUT—
GOLDHAGEN,
HITLER'S GUILT,
THE PARALLEL
LIVES OF SOVIET
AND AMERICAN
JEWS—WE SEEMED
ALWAYS TO COME
BACK TO NUMBERS.
"THESE NUMBERS
DO MATTER,"
HILBERG SAID.
"THEY ALSO MAT-
TER FOR A VERY
SIMPLE REASON—
CALL IT RELIGIOUS,
IF YOU LIKE."**



Raul Hilberg

DAVID HILBERG

gas chambers—except for a single reference to "lurid rumors"—from the most recent edition of *Hitler's War*. "If something didn't happen," he said, "then you don't even dignify it with a footnote."

Leuchter, a pathetic character who seems to be fascinated with the mechanics of killing people, is the star of *Mr. Death*, the new film by the investigative documentarian Errol Morris, the director of *The Thin Blue Line*. Morris's

camera casts an unflinching eye on his star's many shortcomings. Morris also shows that some of Leuchter's "samples" may have come from structures rebuilt after the war, and he tracks down the lab technician who analyzed these samples. The technician explains that because he wasn't told what the material was for, he simply ground everything up—diluting many thousands of times any traces of cyanide that might have been on the surface. "I don't think the Leuchter results have any meaning," he told Morris.

Irving appears in the film, and audiences may well find themselves wondering how a man who proclaims himself an expert at detecting forged documents—and who dismisses the countless eyewitness accounts of the Holocaust by those who survived as "really a matter for psychiatric evaluation"—could have been so easily gulled.

How significant was Irving's conversion? Holocaust denial has been at the center of trials in Austria, Germany, France, and Canada. Some were criminal proceedings, and some, like the Zündel trial, began when survivors filed civil complaints. But in every one of those trials it has been the deniers who have had to defend themselves. When David Irving walks into Courtroom 37, it will be as the plaintiff, with the scales of British justice tipped in his favor. The defendant in this case is Deborah Lipstadt.

Irving's Preoccupations

MY sense of Irving the man was unavoidably colored by sorrow. We had spoken on the phone several times, and had been exchanging e-mails for several months, before the gray afternoon last autumn when I presented myself at his flat, in a red-brick Victorian building off Grosvenor Square, just around the corner from the American embassy. I'd read enough of his interviews to know that Irving could be provocative, truculent, or charming. But when I came to see him, he was none of those things. He seemed deeply tired (he was due to leave for a lecture tour of the

United States the following day) and more than a little sad.

A few days earlier the oldest of his five daughters had committed suicide. Named Josephine Victoria (she was born, in 1963, on the anniversary of Franco's victory in Spain), she'd been schizophrenic, Irving said, for "half her life." More recently she had lost the use of both legs in a car accident. "At the hospital they said to me, 'You know, she must have been very determined.' For someone who is legless to pull herself up and throw herself out of a fourth-floor window . . ." Irving stopped and then continued, responding to a question I hadn't asked. "Do you ever wonder whether you are mentally unsound or not? How do we know? There is no thermometer you can stick in your mouth that will say, 'Oh, today I'm a bit unbalanced.'"

I'd been to his flat once in the summer, to pick up some material, but Irving had been away. "Contact my staff (Bente) in London," he e-mailed me. Bente turned out to be the mother of Irving's youngest daughter, Jessica, who had to be collected from school, and so I was left alone, seated in Irving's study leafing through his press clippings under the gaze of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, whose portrait on the mantelpiece above Irving's desk was flanked by a pair of framed front pages from the *Völkischer Beobachter*, the Nazi Party daily.

One article, Irving later told me with a certain amount of malicious pleasure, was headlined "PROPHETIC WARNING TO JEWRY"—the paper's report of Hitler's famous January, 1939, speech to the Reichstag:

Today I want to be a prophet once more: If international-finance Jewry inside and outside of Europe should succeed once more in plunging nations into another world war, the consequence will not be the Bolshevization of the earth and thereby the victory of Jewry, but the annihilation of the Jewish race in Europe.

This time—perhaps in deference to his siblings, who, though embarrassed by Irving, had come to London for the funeral—the papers had been taken down. Nor was a famous self-portrait of Hitler, given to Irving by the Führer's secretary, anywhere in evidence. And Irving himself, a husky, square-jawed man with a weakness for martial metaphors ("It may be unfortunate for Professor Lipstadt," he had remarked to me on the telephone, "that she is the one who finds herself dragged out of the line and shot"), was on his best behavior.

There were glimpses of the Irving I'd read about. "In crude terms, you've got a problem," he said regarding the fate of Hungarian Jews shipped to Auschwitz in 1944, "because you're talking about 45,000 tons of meat." He described "a very good friend": "Sometimes I say, 'He's Jewish but . . . ' Jewish but very nice, very decent, and so on—from which you can see I have all the stereotypes embedded in me." But these half-hearted attempts to shock me were not very convincing—nor, I think, were they meant to be.





When he's among friends, Irving's manners are less fastidious. At a lecture in Germany a few years ago a television cameraman captured his wit: "There's the one-man gas chamber, carried by two German soldiers looking for Jews alone in the Polish countryside. This one-man gas chamber must have looked like a sedan chair, but disguised as a telephone kiosk. How did they convince the victim to step, of his own free will, into this one-man gas chamber? Apparently there was a phone in it, which would ring, and the soldier would say, 'It's for you!'"

And there is his light verse, to be recited, according to Irving's diary (which he has had to make available to Lipstadt's lawyers), when out with his daughter and "half-breed children" are wheeled past: "I am a Baby Aryan / Not Jewish or Sectarian / I have no plans to marry-an / Ape or Rastafarian." But since Jessica, now six (she spent a portion of our interview sitting on my lap), was barely a year old when that entry was written, the intended audience was probably her mother, whose reaction, Irving noted with satisfaction, was "suitably shocked."

Irving is a prodigious diarist, and though the entries I've seen read more like the first drafts of a press release than like a record of his inner life, the need to fill up the pages does sometimes allow something personal to slip through. His love affairs, for example, are apparently recorded in a code based on the word "amiable," as in "Caroline came round and was amiable." But even the sections cited by the defense in various expert reports hardly reveal a passionate Jew-hater. Irving believes in a worldwide Jewish conspiracy—both to discredit him personally and to exploit the Holocaust for political and economic ends. He habitually refers to Jewish groups as "traditional enemies of the truth," and as far back as 1963, describing a speech by Oswald Mosley at Kensington Town Hall, he wrote, "Yellow Star did not make a showing." But his recurring preoccupations are money and his career, not the Jews.

Irving likes to point out that at one time both his lawyer and his publisher were Jews. The lawyer, Michael Rubinstein (who says he's not Jewish), told me that relations with Irving had been proper and professional. As for Lord Weidenfeld, the assumption of mutual utility can be gleaned from a letter he sent Irving after a newspaper article, obviously inspired by Irving, suggested that Weidenfeld had been pressured not to publish *Hitler's War*. "I have every reason to believe," Weidenfeld wrote, "that it was the reporter's tone and not your intention to disturb a businesslike and friendly climate of cooperation between us." The firm of Weidenfeld and Nicholson went on to publish Irving's biographies of Field Marshals Erhard Milch and Erwin Rommel.

In the end, Irving's relationships with individual Jews don't take us very far. Deborah Lipstadt is a Jew, and Irving sued her. But Gitta Sereny is not a Jew, and after she wrote an article for the London *Observer* accusing him of peddling a "clever mixture of truth and untruth," Irving sued her as

well. In fact Lipstadt never accuses Irving of anti-Semitism. She charges him with "Holocaust denial"—an accusation that has also been leveled against some Jews.

"Judeobolshevism"

IN 1962 *Commentary* asked Hugh Trevor-Roper to review Raul Hilberg's *The Destruction of the European Jews*. Hilberg's analysis of the Nazi machinery of extermination, Trevor-Roper wrote, carried "a profound social content." The "most surprising revelation," he warned *Commentary* readers, would also be "the least welcome"—namely, Hilberg's depiction of the extent to which the Nazis relied on the Jews to assist in their own destruction.

The magazine, published then as now by the American Jewish Committee, hastened to counter Trevor-Roper's praise with an article by the Harvard historian Oscar Handlin, titled "Jewish Resistance to the Nazis." Handlin accused Hilberg of "impiety" and "defaming the dead." In 1968, when Hilberg went to Israel on sabbatical, officials at Yad Vashem, the Israeli Holocaust memorial, refused to allow him into the archives (a situation anticipated by the response to his book published in *Yad Vashem Studies*. The review was titled "Historical Research or Slander?").

Eichmann in Jerusalem, Hannah Arendt's report on the Eichmann trial, fared no better. Writing in *The New York Times Book Review*, Barbara Tuchman accused Arendt of "a conscious desire to support Eichmann's defense." The Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith condemned what it called an "evil book," reminding its members,

It is common knowledge that Eichmann himself deliberately planned the cold-blooded senseless liquidation of an entire people. . . . Eichmann personally conceived the idea of liquidating Jews as a means of "solving" the Jewish problem. . . . He probably could have successfully proposed mass Jewish emigration to his superiors [but] instead he selected the gas chamber, the crematorium and the soap factory.

These attacks, as Peter Novick points out, were "not just false but the reverse of the truth." Like Hilberg, Arendt was assailed for highlighting the role of the Jewish communal leadership in the tragedy—perhaps even more virulently than Hilberg, because in her view Jewish leaders had been particularly culpable. "Wherever Jews lived," she wrote,

there were recognized Jewish leaders, and this leadership, almost without exception, cooperated in one way or another, for one reason or another, with the Nazis. The whole truth was that if the Jewish people had really been unorganized and leaderless, there would have been chaos and plenty of misery but the total number of victims would hardly have been between four and a half and six million people.

Once again *Commentary*, the voice of the American Jewish leadership, pronounced its anathema, with the editor, Norman Podhoretz, personally declaring Arendt's reports "complex,

unsentimental, riddled with paradox and ambiguity"—all, to Podhoretz, apparently, terms of abuse.

Arno Mayer's *Why Did the Heavens Not Darken?* is subtitled "The 'Final Solution' in History." Mayer wanted to rescue the Holocaust from a "cult of remembrance" that in his view had "become overly sectarian" and thus impeded historical understanding. "Whereas the voice of memory is univocal and uncontested, that of history is polyphonic and open to debate," Mayer wrote. History "calls for revision."

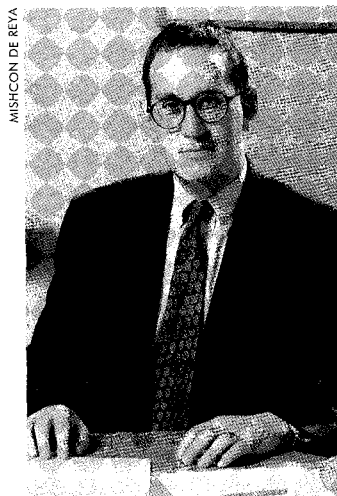
To the Anti-Defamation League those were fighting words. Even worse, Mayer claimed that the Nazis were motivated not by simple anti-Semitism but by a hostility to "Judeobolshevism"—the Nazi word for the belief that Jews controlled both communism and capitalism. Mayer wrote that there was no evidence to suggest that when Adolf Hitler invaded Poland, his objective was "to capture the maximum number of Jews for slaughter." Indeed, the Nazis went to great lengths to push Jews to emigrate. Contrary to Lucy Dawidowicz's *The War Against the Jews* (1975), which argued that genocide was one of the Nazis' principal war aims, Mayer held that Hitler was far more concerned with his "crusade" against communism, and that only after the failure of Operation Barbarossa, the invasion of the Soviet Union, did the Nazis vent their murderous frustration on the Jews of Eastern Europe. Mayer's book jacket carried an endorsement by Pierre Vidal-Naquet, who also wrote a preface to the French edition.

Mayer's thesis that anti-communism was more important in Nazi ideology than anti-Semitism was certainly open to argument, as was his account of events leading to the Final Solution. But argument was just what Mayer didn't get from his critics, who preferred insult and innuendo. "'A mockery of memory and history,' 'outrageous,' . . . 'bizarre,' and 'perverse'" were, said the historian Richard Evans, reporting on the controversy for a London newspaper, "just some of the more printable" responses. Leading the charge was *The New Republic's* reviewer, a young Harvard graduate student named Daniel Goldhagen.

Hilberg, Arendt, and Mayer are all not just Jews but refugees from the Nazis. There can be no doubting their obvious, sympathetic, personal identification with the victims of the Holocaust. "By 1942, in her eighties and blind," Raul Hilberg's grandmother "lay in bed most of the time," Hilberg writes in *The Politics of Memory* (1996). "Apparently that is where the German raiders found her and where they shot her on the spot." Hannah Arendt had been arrested for illegal Zionist activity, and interned by the Vichy French, before escaping to the United States. Arno Mayer's book opens with "A Personal Preface" telling of his own hair-raising escape from Luxembourg and occupied France, and of the fate of his grandfather, who refused to leave Luxembourg and died in Theresienstadt. Such personal bona fides didn't prevent the Anti-Defamation League from including Mayer in its 1993 report "Hitler's Apologists: The Anti-Semitic Propaganda of Holocaust 'Revisionism,'" where his work is cited as an ex-

ample of “legitimate historical scholarship which relativizes the genocide of the Jews”; his crime is to “have argued, with no apparent anti-Semitic motivation”—note how the absence of evidence itself becomes incriminating—“that though millions of Jews were killed during WWII, there was actually no premeditated policy for this destruction.”

Defending Raul Hilberg or Arno Mayer from the charge of anti-Semitism (or, as it is more frequently put, “self-hatred”) is tedious and pointless. So why bother? Because such attacks on honorable scholarship demonstrate that the Holocaust has from the very beginning been contested ground even—perhaps especially—among Jews themselves. And because it isn’t only Holocaust deniers who twist facts, obscure the truth, and, in Deborah Lipstadt’s phrase, create “immoral equivalencies.”



Anthony Julius

The Lever of Guilt

IN Israel, as you might expect in a country where in the 1940s the slang for “Holocaust survivor” translated as “soap,” the battle over how to represent the Nazi genocide has always been bare-knuckled and out in the open. The arguments go back to the Second World War itself, when supporters of mainstream Zionism sought to discredit the Emergency Committee to Save the Jewish People of Europe—the group agitating most noisily for rescue—as a vehicle of the right-wing Zionist terrorist group Irgun. As indeed it was. David Ben-Gurion and other Zionist leaders were not thoughtlessly “writing off” European Jewry, Peter Novick says. They were just making a “chilling . . . appraisal of what was and was not possible.”

Still, when the dimensions of the Jewish catastrophe became clear, Ben-Gurion moved quickly to turn guilt into political capital. What is notable about this effort is that it failed. With the possible exception of Britain, where fear of being compared to the Nazis may have prevented a more forceful response by London to the Zionists’ unilateral declaration of independence, countries responded to the birth of Israel on the basis of their own national interest, as Novick points out. The Soviet Union, which was eager to undercut British influence in the Middle East, supported it. Countries with ties to the Arabs—Britain among them—did not. President Harry Truman, who recognized Israel over State Department opposition, may have been motivated by domestic political considerations—or by a sincere concern for Jewish refugees. But

there is no evidence that guilt played any part in his decision.

Indeed, as we have seen, the initial responses to the Eichmann trial revealed a mistrust of Israel’s motives that was perhaps understandable, coming only a few years after President Dwight Eisenhower had condemned Israel’s actions in the Suez crisis. Novick barely mentions Suez, which is a shame, because it gives strong support to his view that at least in the 1950s the Holocaust provided Israel with no useful “moral capital.”

Novick also appears not to notice that just as the Cold War shaped American responses to the Holocaust, it also shaped responses to Israel—because until June of 1967 it was far from clear that Israel was on “our” side. After all, Ben-Gurion and his associates were socialists. In their war for independence the Israelis were armed with Czech machine guns; from 1956 to 1967 Israel bought the bulk of its weaponry from France, a country whose discontent with American power actually led it to withdraw from NATO’s military command. And it was not until after the Six-Day War that Norman Podhoretz declared that Israel was the religion of the American Jews. What support there was tended to come from the left, from places like *The Nation* and the newspaper *PM*, whose columnist I. F. Stone was an early and vocal advocate for the new state.

All that changed after 1967. Novick doesn’t draw an explicit connection between Israel’s debut as America’s strategic asset in the Middle East and the explosion of Holocaust discourse in the United States, but what he does say is suggestive. For one thing, the image of Jews as military heroes effaced “the stereotype of weak and passive victims, which [had] inhibited Jewish discussion of the Holocaust.” More important, in Cold War terms Israel was now unambiguously on America’s team. And if circumstances made it easier for American Jews to talk about the Holocaust, to draw on the “moral capital” that Israel had miraculously accumulated, that was just as well. For in its determination to hold on to the territories gained in battle, Israel began

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to forfeit whatever sympathy it had attracted as an underdog.

The crucial point, surely, is that it was only after Israel and the United States were bound together strategically that the Holocaust and support for Israel became, in Novick's phrase, "the twin pillars of American Jewish 'civil religion.'" Similarly, it was only in post-1967 America that certain aspects of the Holocaust and its aftermath—from questions of resistance and collaboration to arguments over the propriety of accepting reparation payments—became not just controversial but unmentionable. An exaggeration? In 1953 Lucy Dawidowicz, at the time the American Jewish Committee's resident expert on communism, could both criticize Israel for taking German money and invidiously contrast that willingness with Israel's refusal to take responsibility for displaced Palestinians. Thirty-five years later, when Arno Mayer merely disagreed with Dawidowicz's interpretation of Hitler's intentions, he was practically excommunicated.

Though it is considered impolite to mention them in public, there are still a number of "live questions" about the Holocaust. The dispute between intentionalists like Dawidowicz, who say that genocide was part of Hitler's plan from the beginning, and functionalists like Mayer, who argue that the Final Solution evolved in response to changing conditions and the fortunes of war, is far from settled. David Irving may seize on the arguments of the functionalists as part of his campaign to exculpate Hitler from responsibility for the Holocaust, but that hardly makes them his allies.

Another open—though stifled—question regards the number of survivors. Irving's claim that Jews inflated the number of Holocaust victims in order to extort money from Germany merely demonstrates his imperviousness to fact. The payments to Israel were for absorbing and resettling refugees, and it would thus have been in Israel's interest to exaggerate the number of survivors, not the number of victims. But that doesn't mean there weren't individual beneficiaries who, in order to qualify for payment, claimed to have spent the war hiding in Poland when they had in fact been living, in relative safety if not in comfort, deep inside the Soviet Union.

More delicate still is the question of survivor testimony. According to Elie Wiesel, "Any survivor has more to say than all the historians combined about what happened." Would Wiesel censure Deborah Lipstadt for saying "Lots of survivors who arrived at Auschwitz will tell you they were examined by [Dr. Josef] Mengele. Then you ask them the date of their arrival, and you say, 'Well, Mengele wasn't in Auschwitz yet at that point.' There were lots of doctors . . . [somehow] they all become Mengele"? Would he censure her—or any other historian—for daring to ask for evidence, documents, corroborating testimony? That, after all, is what historians do.

And when they are prevented from doing it, either by Jewish groups who feel that the Holocaust belongs to them alone or by Zionists seeking to preserve Israel's "moral capital," the result is a blurring of distinctions between memory and prop-

aganda that serves only the interests of the Nazi perpetrators and their political legatees.

Yet time and again those who insist on the truth in all its "complex, unsentimental," paradoxical, and ambiguous detail are shouted down. Norman Finkelstein and Ruth Birn, whose book *A Nation on Trial* (1998) pointed out the many scholarly defects of Goldhagen's *Hitler's Willing Executioners*, were subjected to a sustained campaign of personal abuse. Finkelstein and Birn were no more extreme in their condemnation than Raul Hilberg, whose essay deploring "The Goldhagen Phenomenon," in *Les Temps Modernes*, described the Harvard professor's work as "lacking in factual content and logical rigor" and casting a "cloud . . . over the academic landscape." That didn't keep Abraham Foxman, the head of the Anti-Defamation League, from trying to discourage the publication of *A Nation on Trial*.

It isn't only anti-Semites who, in T. S. Eliot's infamous phrase, find a "large number of free-thinking Jews undesirable."

Diana's Lawyer

THOUGH the desk in Anthony Julius's Bloomsbury office is a lawyerly clutter of files and documents, some of them belonging to his client Deborah Lipstadt, every other surface is piled high with mounds of art books that tumble from tables and chairs onto the carpet, forming drifts around our feet. Julius is writing a book on modern art.

The oldest of four sons, Julius eventually graduated from Cambridge with first-class honors and could easily have taken a Ph.D. Then his father, a men's-wear retailer, suddenly died of a brain tumor, so, Julius says, "I stuck with law."

When Diana, Princess of Wales, decided she'd had enough of Prince Charles, she needed an outsider, someone whom the British establishment would regard as "unclubbable," someone who couldn't be "gotten to." A Jewish partner in a prominent London firm, Anthony Julius got Diana a settlement worth roughly \$25 million. By way of a thank you, Diana sent him a silver blotter from Asprey's. Her patronage made him the most famous lawyer in Britain. She also made him an executor of her will.

Anthony Julius eventually got his Ph.D. His thesis, on T. S. Eliot, anti-Semitism, and literary form, begins,

Anti-Semites are not all the same. Some break Jewish bones, others wound Jewish sensibilities. Eliot falls into the second category. He was civil to Jews he knew, offensive to those who merely knew him through his work. He wounded his Jewish readers, if not the Jews of his acquaintance, to whom, apparently, he was 'not disagreeable.' Though worth noting, this is not a distinction that yields a defence to the charge of anti-Semitism. If the work, or some notable part of it, is anti-Semitic, it is the work of an anti-Semite.

With his large, close-cropped head, ambling gait, and slightly stooped posture, Julius looks a bit like a bear in a pinstripe suit—that is, if you can imagine a bear who, though ca-

pable of tearing you apart, would much rather simply persuade you of the error of your views. When I ask him, with my tape recorder running, why this case matters, his response is guarded, almost offhand: "Does this case matter? To whom? It matters to Deborah Lipstadt because she's being sued." When I turn the tape recorder off, his words are equally careful, but there is a flash of anger in his manner that is actually frightening in a man otherwise so perfectly contained.

Julius has tangled with Irving before. In 1992 Irving was expelled from Canada, and one of the documents he later obtained under Canada's Access to Information Law was a dossier compiled, he says, by the Board of Deputies of British Jews which had been sent to the Canadian authorities. Irving wanted to sue for libel, but Julius, who acted for the board at

center of Irving's suit against Gitta Sereny. Irving's experts—a separate category—address two areas. Like Julius, Kevin MacDonald, a professor of psychology at California State University at Long Beach, believes that not all anti-Semites are the same. In his view, though, the distinction is between simple prejudice and the hatred that he feels is to be expected given certain aspects of what he regards as typically Jewish behavior.

Irving's second expert, John Fox, formerly the editor of *The British Journal of Holocaust Education*, will testify about an attempt by a group of British Jews to get him to discourage publication of Irving's Goebbels biography in Great Britain, and will give his own assessment of what he sees as Lipstadt's role in enforcing a kind of orthodoxy in discussions of the



the time, said that Irving was "sadly too late" in filing the proper papers.

Julius knows that this time there will be no such reprieve. He won't discuss the trial in any detail even off the record. But the English rules of procedure allow for very few surprises. Both sides have had to reveal in advance not only what documents they want to cite and what witnesses and experts (scholars or other specialists) they are going to call but also what those witnesses and experts are likely to say.

Irving's few witnesses relate to the question of how he obtained the Goebbels diaries that formed the basis for his biography. Although a side issue for Lipstadt, this dispute is at the

Holocaust. Fox's battles with British Jewry, although perhaps relevant in his mind, have little bearing on Lipstadt's case. But his claim that attempts to discredit David Irving do not spring from communal self-defense or a concern for the truth but are, rather, part of a broader campaign to proscribe discussion of the Holocaust will need to be met head on.

Of course, if Julius can prove that every word Lipstadt wrote about Irving is true, the question of her motives may not matter. Lipstadt's witness statements cover everything from extremism in the Pacific Northwest to Irving's dealings with the Russian archivists who control access to the Goebbels material. But it is her experts and their testimony that will make

up the heart of this case. Judging by the experts he has assembled, it is obvious that Anthony Julius is perfectly aware this is no simple case of libel. From Christopher Browning, the author of *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland* (1992), to Robert John Van Pelt, a co-author of *Auschwitz: 1270 to the Present* (1996), Lipstadt's experts are for the most part the standard authorities in their field. Yet several of them have submitted expert reports that are the equivalent, in both scope and scholarly apparatus, of full-scale books, but with a single subject: David Irving.

The shortest of Lipstadt's expert reports is Browning's "Evidence for the Implementation of the Final Solution"—a sixty-three-page summary of the documentation that Lipstadt's lawyers will argue Irving has had to either ignore or distort to maintain his views on the gas chambers. Next in length comes the ninety-page treatise "David Irving and Right-Wing Extremism," by Roger Eatwell, a professor of politics at the University of Bath. Hajo Funke, a professor of political science at the Free University of Berlin, spends 157 pages detailing Irving's connections with German neo-Nazis and Holocaust deniers. A seventeen-year chronology of Irving's dealings with North American "hate groups," prepared by Brian Levin, then at Stockton College, is similarly extensive, and contains, among other details, an account of Irving's long acquaintance with David

Duke. According to Levin, the ex-Klansman's musings on the Holocaust and other topics in his book *My Awakening* (1998) were shaped by Irving's editorial advice. Peter Longerich, the author of *Policy of Annihilation* (1998) and a history of Nazi storm troopers (both in German), and a co-editor of the German edition of the *Encyclopedia of the Holocaust*, has contributed a seventy-seven-page summary of the evidence for Hitler's responsibility and a ninety-three-page exposition of the planned, systematic nature of the Nazi genocide.

These reports, all of which were at one point posted on Ir-

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Charles Gray

UNIVERSAL PICTORIAL PRESS

ving's Web site, rebut, with varying degrees of pedantry but with uniform attention to detail, different aspects of either Irving's claim against Lipstadt or what might be called Irving's "case" against the Holocaust. But the centerpiece of Lipstadt's defense will undoubtedly be the 726-page examination of Irving's entire oeuvre by Richard Evans, a professor of modern history at Cambridge and a Fellow of the British Academy.

Among his twenty books are *Rereading German History: From Unification to Reunification, 1800-1996* (1997) and *In Hitler's Shadow: West German Historians and the Attempt to Escape From the Nazi Past* (1989). Evans is, as they say, familiar with the literature—hardly surprising, considering that he wrote much of it, including standard works on German feminism, the German underworld, and the history of capital punishment in Germany.

Aside from reading Irving's books (both the English and the German editions), Evans, thanks to the pretrial "discovery" process that is routine in such cases, had access to videotapes and audiocassettes of Irving's speeches, tens of thousands of pages of documents, Irving's complete private diaries, thousands of letters, and a great deal of other material. Evans looked at the totality of Irving's career, from the Dresden book to the Goebbels biography. What he found shocked him deeply.

Penetrating beneath the confident surface of his prose quickly revealed a mass of distortion and manipulation . . . so tangled that detailing it sometimes took up many more words than . . . Irving's original account. Unpicking the eleven-page narrative of the anti-Jewish pogrom of the so-called *Reichskristallnacht* in Irving's book *Goebbels: Mastermind of the 'Third Reich'* and tracing back every part of it to the documentation on which it purports to rest takes up over seventy pages of the present Report. A similar knotted web of distortions, suppressions and manipulations became evident in every single instance which we examined.

I was not prepared for the sheer depths of duplicity which I encountered in Irving's treatment of the historical sources, nor for the way in which this dishonesty permeated his entire written and spoken output. It is as all-pervasive in his early work as it is in his later publications. . . . It is clear . . . that Irving's claim to have a very good and thorough knowledge of the evidence on the basis of which the history of Nazi Germany has to be written is completely justified. His numerous mistakes and egregious errors are not, therefore, due to mere ignorance or sloppiness; on the contrary, it is

obvious that they are calculated and deliberate. That is precisely why they are so shocking.

Evans's findings, though doubtless unwelcome to Irving, ought also to cause a certain amount of discomfort among Irving's defenders in journalism and the academy.

Irving has relied in the past, and continues to rely in the present, on the fact that his readers and listeners, reviewers and interviewers lack either the time, or the expertise, to probe deeply enough into the sources he uses for his work to uncover the distortions, suppressions and manipulations to which he has subjected them.

How Do We Know?

THERE is some risk," Judge Charles Gray told me in his chambers on the day before his first hearing on the case, "of one's being asked to become a historian. Judges aren't historians."

Gray's disclaimer is slightly misleading. Appointed to the bench only eighteen months ago, Gray spent ten years as a Queen's counsel, or QC—the elite among trial lawyers. He represented the Tory Cabinet Minister Jonathan Aitken in his suit against *The Guardian* and defended the *Daily Mirror* journalist Alistair Campbell—now Prime Minister Tony Blair's spokesman—when he was sued by a Tory member of Parliament. His most famous case, however, came when Lord Aldington sued the writer Nikolai Tolstoy over charges that at the end of the Second World War, Aldington had been responsible for handing over to the Soviets—and certain death—Cossacks who'd fought in the German army and been taken prisoner by the British. Gray's pleadings, which, as he told me, "did involve history," resulted in an award to his client of a record £1.5 million (\$2.4 million) in damages.

If Gray seems unduly modest about his command of history, his concern to ensure not just the reality but also the appearance of a fair trial makes more sense. Anthony Julius will be joined at the defense table by Richard Rampton QC, the lawyer representing Penguin Books. David Irving will represent himself. Libel cases cost thousands of dollars a day, and under British law any attorney who took on Irving's case might be liable for the other side's costs if he lost. As a "litigant in person," when David Irving appears in court, he will be on his own.

"It makes the judge's task more difficult," Gray says. "One has to ensure that he's not disadvantaged by not having the legal expertise available to the other side." This disparity in means may be good news for Deborah Lipstadt and her supporters, though Richard Rampton, who acted for McDonald's in its recent Pyrrhic victory over a pair of penniless vegetarian anarchists, also litigants in person, which cost the corporation \$15 million and gained nothing but bad publicity, is well aware of the perils of overkill.

David Irving has had decades of practice at playing the lone

iconoclast whose devotion to truth puts establishment noses out of joint. This pose is, I suspect, what accounts for his unlikelier supporters. Certainly it was one he adopted with relish during our interview, whether by inviting me to share his belief that "the Conservative Party is largely financed by the CIA" or by jauntily acknowledging a desire "to see egg on faces."

A desire we all share. At times the contrarian impulse is almost enough to make us forget that Irving brought this on himself. He is the plaintiff, Lipstadt the defendant.

Irving's odd fascination, though, has little to do with the urge to see authority get its comeuppance—and even less with some hidden vein of nostalgia for the Third Reich. It is rooted instead in something far more basic, something that mere facts can never completely banish: doubt. How do we *know* that there really were gas chambers at Auschwitz? Or that millions of Jews were killed? What if, as Irving says, we are off by an order of magnitude? Even if the Nazis killed only hundreds of thousand of Jews, isn't that bad enough? Do the numbers really matter?

Last May, just as I started reading about this trial, the *London Review of Books* ran an account by a reporter for *The Guardian* of her attempts to corroborate accounts of atrocities in Kosovo. Her tale was inconclusive, honorably so. But her final words made me deeply angry.

Maybe the truth here is not one thing: but I don't want to be an accomplice to a lie. . . . Nobody much wants to return to Jean Cocteau, but there was something soothing in the words my friend quoted. 'History is a combination of reality and lies,' he said. 'The reality of history becomes a lie. The reality of the fable becomes the truth.'

That seemed to me a fancy argument for letting herself off the hook. Maybe she couldn't find out what happened. Maybe she should have tried harder. And if she believes that reporting the facts makes no difference to whether the fable becomes the truth, and even finds the prospect "soothing," then maybe she should find another line of work. All the same, I understood the temptation.

The Atheist

IT wasn't that I thought Irving might be right—more that I allowed myself to wonder, with a little shudder, "But does it matter?" It wasn't, in other words, exactly that I doubted the facts; rather, I was curious about what would happen if the facts somehow made no difference.

What pulled me back was a memory: *I am six years old, and my father has brought his best friend home for dinner. After we eat, the friend takes the back off our television and shows me the tubes lighting up inside. One is burned out, and as he replaces it, I notice a line of numbers on his arm, just below the wrist. "What are those, Uncle Mike?" He tells me that the Germans put them there when he was a little boy, "so I wouldn't get lost."*

My Uncle Mike was never a little boy. When he was twelve or thirteen, the Germans occupied Hungary, and his entire family was put on a train to Auschwitz. Big for his age, and claiming to be older, he was sent to work in the mines. This was 1944, and Auschwitz was liberated by the Red Army in January of 1945. By then the rest of his family had been gassed.

The truth is, I can't be certain of all these details, and my Uncle Mike has been dead for some time. I was reminded of him while reading Irving's response to the obvious questions: What happened to the missing Jews? If they didn't die in the camps, where were they? Irving talks about "the large number that turned up in the state of Palestine, what's now the state of Israel," and sometimes, as if acknowledging that this number isn't nearly large enough, claims that others might have been killed in Dresden. The rest, he suggests, fled to the USSR or the United States. As a simple matter of accounting, this is preposterous. As an explanation, it is also monstrous—because the assumption behind it is that, lured by the good life to the United States, or chasing the workers' paradise in Russia, or seeking the Zionist dream in Israel, people like my Uncle Mike would simply forget that they had mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, grandparents, children, and wouldn't bother to look for them, which is why so many Jews are still unaccounted for. In other words, it presumes that Jews are not human beings.

No one knows this better than Raul Hilberg. *The Politics of Memory* tells the story of Hilberg's uncle Josef, interned by the Vichy French in 1940.

My father, by then in New York, received Josef's frantic appeals for help, but there was no money for tickets which might have enabled Josef to escape to America. When the deportations from the Vichy-French zone began in 1942, Josef disappeared. "The blood of my brother is upon me," my father would say. . . .

Hilberg, who spent years of his life in archives, never forgot about his uncle Josef. In 1978 he found him, on a list of deportees from France: Joseph Gaber. "He was deported on August 19, 1942, and arrived in Auschwitz two days later," Hilberg writes. "Since he was already forty-eight years old, he must have been gassed immediately."

Yet when St. Martin's canceled Irving's Goebbels biography, Raul Hilberg stood up for David Irving. "If these people want to speak," he told Hitchens, "let them. . . . I am not for taboos and I am not for repression." Hilberg reaffirmed these views to me over the telephone last summer, with two minor modifications: "Denial hurts people. There are survivors. That should not be forgotten." And "I believe in the freedom not to be responsible. But that doesn't mean I endorse it."

What Hilberg does endorse is facts: numbers, names, places, dates. When I arrived at Hilberg's house in Vermont, at the beginning of September, we began by talking about

numbers. In *The Destruction of the European Jews*, Hilberg says one million Jews were killed at Auschwitz. His total for the Holocaust, however, is 5.1 million, not six million, a conclusion that has caused him no end of trouble. Does it really matter? I asked.

"Yes, it matters," Hilberg said. "It matters on a variety of counts. When you segment these losses by country, you find that the major difference between my count and those who say six million . . . is the Soviet Union. Which means, if they didn't die, they're there. . . . That matters, because you are talking about a substantial part of Jewish history. And you're talking about current Jewish history!"

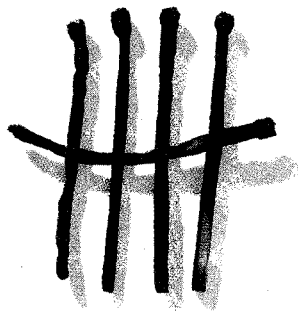
Hilberg launched into a learned and fascinating lecture on the vagaries of the Soviet census, the politics of census data, and the dangers of accepting unsourced estimates. "The German statisticians called it a house number," he said, "whenever a number like that appears [that] you can't prove."

I asked about gas chambers. Irving has devoted so much energy to creating doubt about gas chambers. Why? "People are shot or hacked to death in other countries," Hilberg said, "even after World War Two—Rwanda, for example. You built the gas chamber with a view to killing a *mass* of people. Once you have a gas chamber, you have a vision, and the vision is total annihilation. In a gas chamber you don't see the victim. So the gas chamber in that sense is more dangerous, the gas chamber is more criminal. The gas chamber has wider implications. So when you deny the gas chamber, you deny not just a part of the event but one of the defining concepts. Auschwitz has become the synonym for the Holocaust. And of course you deny, apart from anything else, the death of several million people."

Whatever we talked about—Goldhagen, Hitler's guilt, the parallel lives of Soviet and American Jews—we seemed always to come back to numbers. "These numbers do matter," Hilberg said. "They also matter for a very simple reason—call it religious, if you like." At this point he saw my gaze shift from the Teletubbies magnets on his refrigerator to the menorah on top of his television set.

"I'm an atheist," he said. "All these things belong to my wife, not me. I am an atheist. But there is ultimately, if you don't want to surrender to nihilism entirely, the matter of a record. Does the record matter? In my judgment it is not discussable. It is not arguable. It matters because it matters to me—it's my life."

The sanctity of facts. As I left Hilberg, I thought, It's not much. After a lifetime of studying brutality, inhumanity, murder on an industrial scale, after personal tragedy and professional conflict, this is what he has left to hold on to. The sanctity of facts. And yet Hilberg's passion for detail, his police-reporter's faith in getting it down right, stayed with me longer than any of the conflicting sympathies aroused by my inquiries. The sanctity of facts. It isn't much. It may not be enough. But it is all we have. ☪



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The Virus and the Vaccine

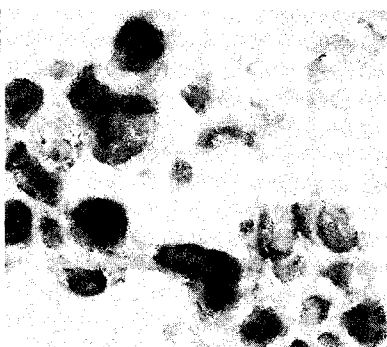
by DEBBIE BOOKCHIN and JIM SCHUMACHER

A simian virus known as SV40 has been associated with a number of rare human cancers. This same virus contaminated the polio vaccine administered to 98 million Americans from 1955 to 1963. Federal health officials see little reason for concern. A growing cadre of medical researchers disagree

HARVEY Pass, the chief of thoracic surgery at the National Cancer Institute, in Bethesda, Maryland, was sitting in his laboratory one spring afternoon in 1993 when Michele Carbone, a wiry young Italian pathologist who was working as a researcher at the NCI, strode in with an unusual request. Pass had never before met Carbone, and had talked to him for the first time, on the telephone, only a few hours before. Now Carbone was asking Pass for his help in proving a controversial theory he had developed about the origins of mesothelioma, a deadly cancer that afflicts the mesothelial cells in the lining of the chest and the lung. Mesothelioma was virtually unheard of prior to 1950, but the incidence of the disease has risen steadily since then. Though it is considered rare—accounting for the deaths of about 3,000 Americans a year, or about one half of one percent of all domestic cancer deaths—the disease is particularly pernicious. Most patients die within eighteen months of diagnosis.

Pass, one of the world's leading mesothelioma surgeons, knew, like other scientists, that the disease was caused by asbestos exposure. But Carbone had a hunch he wanted to explore. He told Pass that he wondered if the cancer might also be caused by a virus—a monkey virus, known as simian virus 40, or SV40, that had widely contaminated early doses of the polio vaccine, but that had long been presumed to be harmless to people.

Pass listened as Carbone described for him the history of



One of SV40's constituent proteins, large T-antigen; "the most oncogenic protein ever discovered"

the early polio vaccine. A breakthrough in the war against polio had come in the early 1950s, when Jonas Salk took advantage of a new discovery: monkey kidneys could be used to culture the abundant quantities of polio virus necessary to mass-produce a vaccine. But there were problems with the monkey kidneys. In 1960 Bernice Eddy, a government researcher, discovered that when she injected hamsters with the kidney mixture on which the vaccine was cultured, they developed tumors. Eddy's superiors tried to keep the discovery quiet, but Eddy presented her data at a cancer conference in New York. She was eventually demoted, and lost her laboratory. The cancer-causing virus was soon isolated by other scientists and dubbed SV40, because it was the fortieth simian virus discovered. Alarm spread through the scientific community as researchers realized that nearly every dose of the vaccine had been contaminated. In 1961 federal health officials ordered vaccine manufacturers to screen for the virus and eliminate it from the vaccine. Worried about creating a panic, they kept the discovery of SV40 under wraps and never recalled existing stocks. For two more years millions of additional people were needlessly exposed—bringing the total to 98 million Americans from 1955 to 1963. But after a flurry of quick studies, health officials decided that the virus, thankfully, did not cause cancer in human beings.

After that the story of SV40 ceased to be anything more than a medical curiosity. Even though the virus became a widely used cancer-research tool, because it caused a variety

of tumors so easily in laboratory animals, for the better part of four decades there was virtually no research on what SV40 might do to people.

Carbone had reviewed some old research papers on the contamination and some of the early tests on SV40. He had even reviewed the notes from a crucial 1963 epidemiological study, by Joseph Fraumeni, an NCI researcher, which had concluded that children inoculated with contaminated vaccine did not show increased mortality rates. The studies did not impress Carbone: no one had systematically searched for evidence of the virus in tumors, and, as Fraumeni himself noted, the epidemiological study was too short to have detected certain slow-developing cancers. (Mesothelioma can take twenty to forty years to develop.)

Carbone had just finished a series of experiments in which he had injected the virus into dozens of hamsters. Every one of them developed mesothelioma and died within three to seven months. The results made Carbone wonder if SV40 might also play a role in human mesothelioma. He had come to see Pass because he had heard that the senior surgeon had meticulously saved tumor tissue from every one of the dozens of mesothelioma surgeries he had performed, and now had one of the largest collections of mesothelioma biopsies in the world. Carbone asked Pass if he could look for SV40 DNA in Pass's tumor-tissue samples, using a sophisticated molecular technique, known as polymerase chain reaction, or PCR, to extract tiny fragments of DNA from the frozen tissue and then amplify and characterize them.

As they talked, Pass became more and more impressed with Carbone. The young scientist was energetic and extremely self-confident—something Pass attributed to Carbone's surgical patrimony. (Carbone's father is a well-known orthopedic surgeon in Italy.) When Carbone had finished describing his proposed experiment, Pass realized that the implications were

potentially significant. Only a handful of viruses have been directly associated with human cancers, and none of them are simian in origin. If SV40 was linked to mesothelioma in people, might it also cause bone and brain cancers in human beings, as it had done in hamsters? What if the monkey virus could spread from person to person? And if the virus was cancer-causing, or oncogenic, what was one to make of the fact that millions of Americans had been exposed to it as part of a government-sponsored vaccination program?

"I thought to myself, He's got this wild-assed idea," Pass recalls.

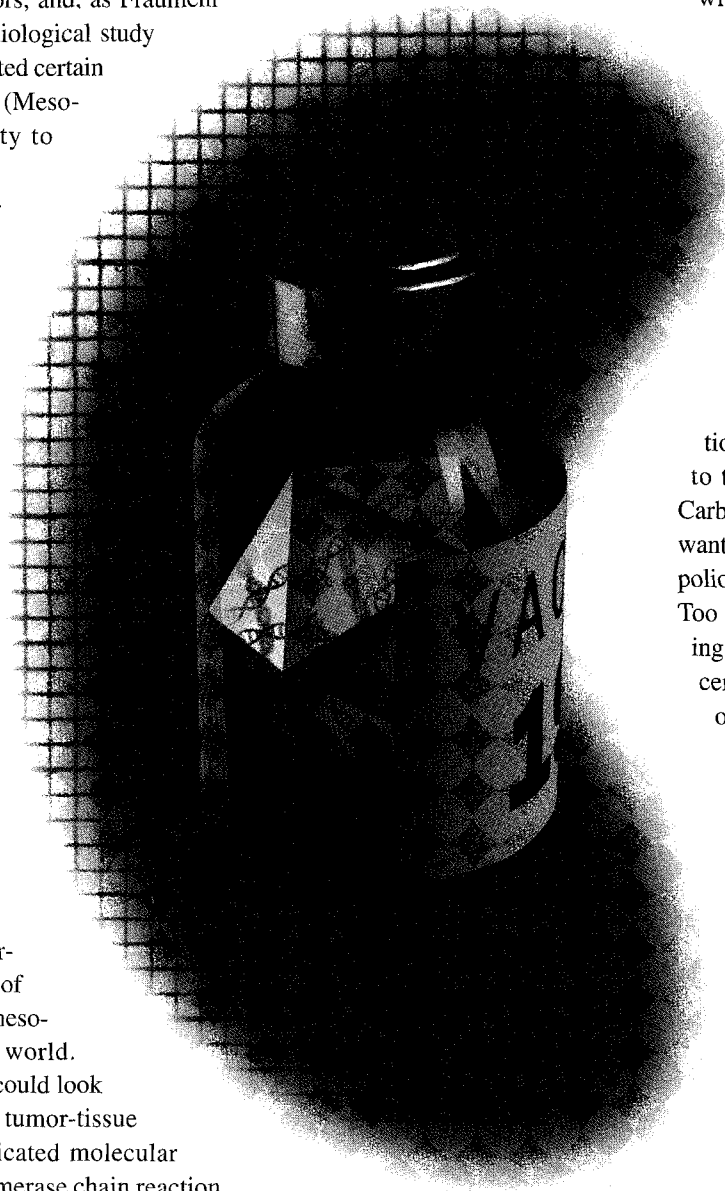
"If it's true, it's unbelievable. Even if it's not, I'm going to get a hell of an education in state-of-the-art molecular biology."

Others at the National Institutes of Health—including some of the scientists who had been around at the time of the contamination scare—were less receptive to the novel theory. They told Carbone that the last thing anyone wanted to hear was that the exalted polio vaccine was linked to cancer. Too much was at stake. Implicating a vaccine contaminant in cancer—even if the contamination occurred some forty years ago—might easily shake public confidence in vaccines in general. And besides, everyone knew that asbestos was the cause of mesothelioma.

Carbone sought the advice of two renowned pathologists, Umberto Saffiotti, the chief of the NCI's Laboratory of Experimental Pathology, and Harold L. Stewart, a former director of pathology at the NCI who was once the

head of the American Association for

Cancer Research. Both urged Carbone to follow his intuition. "Forget what people tell you," Stewart told Carbone. "They told me I was wrong all my life. If you want to do it, you should, or you will regret it." That spring afternoon in 1993, with Pass's mesothelioma samples in hand, Carbone called an old friend, Antonio Procopio, a professor of experimental



pathology in Italy who had worked for three years at the NIH. "I asked him if he was willing to do this crazy project with me," Carbone says. "I told him I could not pay him or his expenses." A month later Procopio arrived in Bethesda. "We had no money," Carbone recalls. "He slept in my house for six months, and we worked day and night."

It turned out that Pass's samples were loaded with the monkey virus: 60 percent of the mesothelioma samples contained SV40 DNA; the nontumor tissues used as controls were negative. Moreover, Carbone found that in most of the positive samples he tested, the monkey virus was active, producing proteins—suggesting to Carbone that the SV40 was not just an opportunistic "passenger virus" that had found a convenient hiding place in the malignant cells but was likely to have been involved in causing the cancer.

In 1994 Carbone, Pass, and Procopio published the results of their experiment in *Oncogene*, one of the world's leading cancer-research journals. They proposed SV40 as a possible co-carcinogen in human mesothelioma. It was the first time researchers had put forward hard evidence that the all-but-forgotten vaccine contaminant might cause cancer in human beings.

A Solution to an Enigma

MICHELE Carbone is almost stereotypically Italian: generous with his emotions, outspoken, and jovial. He is strikingly handsome, with large brown eyes and shoulder-length brown hair. Carbone grew up in a cultured home in Calabria, on the shores of the Mediterranean in southern Italy. As a youth he often spent hours poring over medical

world, and quickly won a coveted NIH doctoral fellowship. In 1993 he received a Ph.D. in human pathology. In less than a decade he has risen to the top of his profession. Today he is internationally recognized as an expert in mesothelioma.

Since 1994 Carbone has written more than twenty studies and reviews investigating SV40's link to human cancer. "There is no doubt that SV40 is a human carcinogen," he says. "SV40 is definitely something you don't want in your body." Carbone suggests that the virus works in tandem with asbestos or by itself to transform healthy mesothelial cells into cancerous ones.

Since he published his first study, scientists at seventeen major laboratories—in the United States, Great Britain, France, Belgium, Italy, and New Zealand—have confirmed Carbone's research with respect to the presence of SV40 in human mesothelioma. Their results point to a solution to an enigma that long puzzled researchers. At least 20 percent of mesothelioma victims report no asbestos exposure, and only 10 percent of people who have had heavy exposure to asbestos ever develop mesothelioma. The experiments suggest that SV40 may be another factor at work in the tumors.

Two very recent studies, from Finland and Turkey, found no SV40 in domestic mesothelioma samples but did find it, respectively, in American and Italian samples. The authors observe that their negative findings lend support to the theory that contaminated polio vaccine is associated with the disease: neither Turkey nor Finland used SV40-contaminated vaccines. Today Finland has one of the lowest rates of mesothelioma in the Western world.

The virus has also been located in other kinds of tumors. More than a dozen laboratories have found SV40 in various kinds of rare brain and bone tumors. In 1996 Carbone reported that he had found SV40 in a

third of the osteosarcomas (bone cancers of a type that afflicts about 900 Americans a year) and nearly half of the other bone tumors he tested—research that has since been confirmed by numerous laboratories. The virus has also been detected in pituitary and thyroid tumors.

The possibility of a link between SV40 and brain tumors is particularly intriguing. Like mesothelioma, brain tumors have become dramatically more common in recent years. Brain

tumors will be diagnosed in about 3,000 children in the United States alone this year. In 1995 Janet Butel, the chairman of the department of molecular virology and microbiology at the Baylor College of Medicine, in Texas, and her chief collaborator, John Lednicky, also a Baylor virologist, reported that they had found SV40 in a number of children's brain tumors. Butel and Lednicky reported that DNA sequencing revealed that the virus was not a hybrid but rather authentic SV40—

Alarm spread through the scientific community as researchers realized that the polio vaccine had been contaminated by a monkey virus, now known as SV40. In 1961 federal health officials ordered manufacturers to screen for the virus and eliminate it from the vaccine. After a flurry of quick studies, health officials decided that SV40 did not cause cancer in human beings.

texts, some of them 300 years old, in the voluminous library started by the first of the seven generations of Carbone physicians to date. If his father gave him science, from his mother he may have inherited the strong intuition that is his distinguishing characteristic as a researcher. She is an accomplished artist whose work is exhibited widely in Europe.

Carbone graduated in 1984, at the top of his class, from the University of Rome Medical School, one of the largest in the

the same as the SV40 found in monkeys. In the fall of 1996 an Italian research team, led by Mauro Tognon, of the University of Ferrara, announced that it had found SV40 DNA in a large percentage of brain and neurological tumors, including glioblastomas, astrocytomas, ependymomas, and papillomas of the choroid plexus. The researchers suggested that SV40 may be a “viral cofactor” involved in the sharp rise in human brain tumors. Late last year an extensive study undertaken in China reinforced those results. The study examined sixty-five brain tumors, finding SV40 in each of the eight ependymomas and two choroid-plexus papillomas, common brain tumors among children. It also found the virus in 33 to 90 percent of five other kinds of brain tumor examined. The authors, writing in the November, 1999, issue of *Cancer*, noted that the virus was actively expressing proteins.

Recent research also indicates that SV40 has gained a secure foothold in the human species. In 1996 Tognon and his collaborators reported that they had also found the virus in 45 percent of the sperm samples and 23 percent of the blood samples they tested from healthy people, suggesting that the monkey virus could spread through sexual contact or unscreened blood products. In 1998 the presence of SV40 antibodies in human blood samples was reported by Butel, who tested several hundred American blood samples and found antibodies to SV40 in about 10 percent of them. Butel’s laboratory also tested samples from children born from 1980 to 1995—decades after the contaminated vaccine was removed from the market. A surprising six percent tested positive—offering evidence that the virus may now be spreading from person to person, including from mother to child.

The Critics Respond

THE presence of SV40 in human tumors has been reported on in more than forty independent research papers. But one molecular study that has had an enormous impact on the direction of SV40 research and funding was performed not by a virologist, like Butel, or a molecular pathologist, like Carbone, but by an epidemiologist named Howard Strickler. Strickler served as a senior clinical investigator in the NCI’s Viral Epidemiology Branch for many years before he joined the Albert Einstein College of Medicine, in New York, last winter. He has been persistently skeptical of any association between the vaccine contaminant and tumors. Though he is no longer at the NCI, he remains instrumental in the government response.

In June of 1996 Strickler published a paper with Keerti Shah, of the School of Public Health at Johns Hopkins University, in Baltimore, in the journal *Cancer Epidemiology, Biomarkers and Prevention*. Strickler and Shah reported that they had come up empty-handed in their search for SV40 in fifty mesothelioma samples. Their study and a 1999 British study are the only two published SV40 studies with negative results. These two papers, particularly Strickler’s, are cited again and

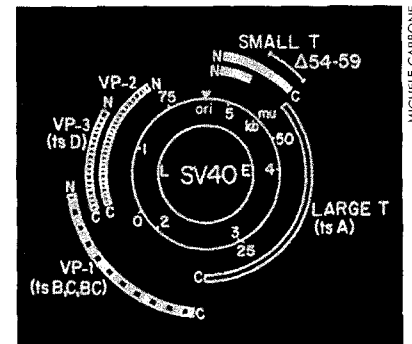
again by federal health officials as proof that the dozens of peer-reviewed papers reporting SV40’s presence in human tumors are unpersuasive and that a major research effort on SV40 is unnecessary.

Strickler acknowledges that he has never done PCR himself (Shah was responsible for the PCR work for their 1996 collaboration), but he challenges the work of other labs that have found SV40 in human tumors. “I feel that the data are mixed regarding the detection of SV40 DNA in human tissues,” Strickler says, citing his own negative study and the British study. Strickler also points out that when SV40 is found in tumor cells, it often occurs only at very low levels. Whereas human papilloma virus (HPV), which causes cervical cancer, can be detected

at rates of fifty viruses per cancer cell, SV40 is sometimes found at a rate of one virus per cell. “I find it curious that even the laboratories that detect SV40 in the cancers report that the virus is present at such extremely low levels,” Strickler says. John Lednický, of Baylor, counters that HPV is very different from SV40. Strickler “is comparing an apple with an orange,” he says. “SV40 is known to be far more tumorigenic than HPV in animals. One copy of SV40 per cell is enough to transform a cell.”

Several SV40 researchers have criticized Strickler’s 1996 study and the more recent British one, saying that they treated specimens in a manner that would not result in the efficient extraction of SV40 DNA. Bharat Jasani, the director of the molecular diagnostic unit at the University of Wales, in Cardiff, has found SV40 in British mesothelioma samples. He recently wrote a lengthy critique of the two studies that has not yet been published. In this critique Jasani concludes that the negative results “are explainable by the paucity of the diagnostic biopsy material used and/or insufficient sensitivity of the overall PCR methodology used.” Jasani says that Strickler’s PCR technique would have missed low levels of SV40.

Federal health officials are understandably concerned that any link between SV40 and human cancers could frighten people away from the polio vaccine and vaccination in general. They stress that before SV40 in the polio vaccine can be linked definitively to cancer, the proposition must clear important scientific hurdles. Carbone and others must prove that the SV40 they have found is not a laboratory contaminant. They must demonstrate that SV40 is responsible for the cellular damage that leads to cancer and is not just a benign “passenger” in human tumors. And they must show that it



A schematic diagram of the SV40 virus, which consists of six proteins

was introduced into human beings through the polio vaccine.

In assessing the research to date, Strickler is perplexed that the virus has been found in so many kinds of tumors. In addition to the confirmed research reporting the virus in more than a half dozen kinds of brain tumors and a similar number of bone tumors, researchers in new, isolated studies have reported finding the virus in Wilms tumors, which afflict the kidney, and adenosarcomas, rare cancers of the uterus. "It's not likely

lioma samples they tested. Each laboratory's control samples tested negative, suggesting that the positive SV40 samples were not the result of laboratory contamination. The results were published in the journal *Cancer Research* in 1998.

Strickler believes that Testa's study "did not really move the ball forward" in determining whether contamination lies behind findings of SV40 in human tumors. He questions Testa's conclusions. "They are trying to make a large point out of the fact that results were reproduced," he says. But according to Strickler, that such a high percentage of tumors tested positive actually casts doubt on the study's reliability and raises the possibility that the labs merely exchanged contaminated samples. "The prevalence [of SV40-positive samples] was so high . . . that you have no way to make the distinction between [contamination] and a true positive result," he says.

Carbone and some of the other scientists we have interviewed say that

Strickler's contamination theory is a red herring. "We've documented that it is the case that this virus is present and is expressed in these tumors," Testa says. "I think the onus is on [federal health officials] to take this new research into consideration." Carbone, not surprisingly, is even more adamant. "The idea that these tumor samples, tested in laboratories all over the world, were all contaminated, while all the controls remained negative, is ridiculous," he says. "There is no scientific evidence in support of contamination, and plenty of evidence to the contrary. Moreover, many labs have demonstrated SV40 using techniques other than PCR."

Recently we asked several prominent scientists to evaluate the SV40 studies. George Klein, at the Karolinska Institute, in Stockholm, who chaired the Nobel Assembly, and is a longtime expert on SV40, read Testa's study. His conclusion was different from Strickler's. According to Klein, the Testa study is "quite convincing concerning the association between SV40 and mesothelioma," and "the evidence suggests that SV40 may contribute to the genesis of some human tumors, mesothelioma in particular."

Carlo Croce, the editor of *Cancer Research* and a member of the National Academy of Sciences, agreed. Not only is it indisputable that SV40 is present in human tumor samples, he told us, but "it looks like the presence of the virus contributes to the cause of mesothelioma."

Janet Rowley, the editor of the journal *Genes, Chromosomes and Cancer* and a professor of molecular genetics and cell biology at the University of Chicago, is a pioneer in the study of chromosome abnormalities in cancer. Rowley's groundbreaking research was itself called into question for years. "People didn't believe that chromosome abnormalities had anything to do with leukemia," she recalled. "It took a

In 1997 the International Mesothelioma Interest Group set out to determine once and for all if SV40 was present in human mesothelioma samples. An internationally known molecular geneticist oversaw the study. He confesses that initially he doubted the idea that SV40 could be found in human mesotheliomas. But the results of the investigation he led changed his mind.

that a single virus causes ten thousand different diseases," Strickler says. "That's not how it works."

These anomalies have fueled Strickler's suspicion that many of the SV40 findings in human tumors may really be false positives resulting from laboratory contamination. He points out that SV40 is used for cancer research in so many laboratories around the world that almost any lab involved with tumor assays could conceivably harbor it. "Is it possible that SV40 is in human tumors and that SV40 is at some level circulating in the human population?" Strickler asks. "Could it be true? I can't exclude the possibility, but the studies to demonstrate it haven't really been done, and the data in our hands have been negative." Strickler's former boss, James Goedert, the chief of the NCI's Viral Epidemiology Branch, agrees. Although he says he has an open mind about SV40, he believes that contamination may lie behind the findings of Carbone, Butel, and others.

In 1997, largely in response to Strickler's study, the International Mesothelioma Interest Group set out to determine once and for all if the virus was present in human mesothelioma samples. The organization asked an internationally known molecular geneticist, Joseph R. Testa, the director of the Human Genetics Program at the Fox Chase Cancer Center, in Philadelphia, to oversee a study. Testa, who specializes in mesothelioma research, confesses that initially he doubted the idea that SV40 could be found in human mesotheliomas, because he believed it was well established that asbestos was the cause of the disease. "I'm a very careful person," Testa says. "I had a fair amount of skepticism about it." But the results of the investigation he led changed his mind. Four laboratories participated in the tightly controlled study, including Carbone's. All four found SV40 in at least nine out of the twelve mesothe-

NOT ALL TALK IS CHEAP

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long time to break down that prejudice.” She told us that Carbone had faced the same kind of doubts that first greeted her. “Everybody had assumed that mesothelioma was associated with asbestos. One of the important things in medicine is not to let your assumptions and those generally accepted paradigms obscure the fact that maybe there’s more.” Rowley believes that Carbone and Testa’s work strongly implicates SV40 as a causal factor in some mesotheliomas.

“Like Somebody Set Off a Bomb”

CARBONE’S office is tucked into a quiet second-floor corner of the glass-and-concrete Cardinal Bernardin Cancer Center, at Loyola University, in Maywood, Illinois. The center is just a few miles west of Chicago and about ten minutes by car from Oak Park, where Carbone lives in a stately Frank Lloyd Wright house, with his wife and two daughters. Carbone came to Loyola in 1996 after a two-year stint at the University of Chicago. Now an associate professor of pathology, he works with Paola Rizzo, his senior scientist and closest collaborator, and a handful of post-docs and lab assistants in a tidy laboratory just down the hall from his office.

The lab is lively. Carbone has recruited compatriots as some of his research assistants, and the whirl of high-tech machinery is punctuated by good-natured banter in Italian. This afternoon Carbone is examining an SV40-infected cell-culture

protein ever discovered. It is unique, he says, in its ability to cause cancer when it is set loose inside a cell.

In 1997, in *Nature Medicine*, Carbone published the first in a series of papers that outlined how large T-antigen blocks crucial tumor-suppressor pathways in human mesothelial cells. Whenever a cell begins to divide, in the process known as mitosis, a small army of quality-control agents goes to work. Running up and down the cell’s DNA, these genes and proteins work together to scrutinize the DNA’s integrity. If at any stage of cell division they detect DNA abnormalities that cannot be repaired, mitosis is halted and the cell undergoes apoptosis, or cellular suicide. The principal in this elaborate regulatory dance is a gene called p53. Arnold Levine, the president of The Rockefeller University, in New York City, and the discoverer of p53, says that 60 percent of all cancers involve some sort of p53 damage, mutation, or inactivation. “The p53 gene is central to human cancers,” he says, describing it as “the first line of defense against cancer formation.”

Carbone’s experiments have shown that in human mesotheliomas large T-antigen attacks p53, binding to it so that it cannot function properly. Large T-antigen also strangles a series of proteins called Rbs, which together serve as some of the final gatekeepers in cellular division.

No other cancer-causing virus uses just one protein to knock out two different regulatory pathways simultaneously. For example, human papilloma virus must produce two proteins, E6 and E7, to inactivate p53 and the Rbs respectively; SV40 does its damage in one stroke. Levine calls large T-antigen “a remarkable protein.”

Large T-antigen’s cancer-causing havoc isn’t limited to disabling a cell’s most important tumor suppressors. It can also damage chromosomes by adding or deleting whole sections of DNA or reshuffling the genes. Once the virus is finished with a cell, Joseph Testa says, “it looks like somebody set off a bomb inside the cell’s nucleus, because of all these chromosome rearrangements.” Carbone says that because SV40 binds to tumor-suppressor genes and also causes genetic damage, it “is one of the strongest carcinogens we know of.”

Yet he emphasizes that most people who carry SV40 in their cells won’t develop cancer, because a healthy immune system generally seeks out and destroys invading viruses. He points out that large T-antigen normally provokes a particularly strong immune response, unless a person has been exposed to asbestos, a known immunosuppressant. “Human beings,” Carbone says, “have devised many mechanisms to defend themselves against cancer. This is one of the reasons that human beings live so long compared with other animals. Human cancer is usually the result of a number of unfortunate events that together cause a malignant cell to emerge.”

But SV40 may have evolved other strategies to elude the immune system. In a recently published article Carbone writes that sometimes SV40 produces such small amounts of large T-antigen that the virus escapes detection. Paradoxically, in this

JOSEPH TESTA



The difference SV40 makes: left, chromosomes of a normal mesothelial cell; right, damaged chromosomes after infection

plate under a microscope. He speaks almost fondly of the virus he has studied for most of the past decade. SV40 is “the smallest perfect war machine ever,” Carbone murmurs. “He’s so small. But he’s got everything he needs.”

Magnified 50,000 times under an electron microscope, SV40 doesn’t seem particularly menacing. It looks almost pretty—bluish snowflakes, against a field of white. The virus consists of six proteins, three of which make up the twenty-sided triangular scaffolding that is the virus’s protein skin. But one of the remaining proteins, called large T-antigen (for “tumor antigen”), is, according to Carbone, the most oncogenic

hypothesis small amounts of the virus are even more dangerous than large amounts.

Other scientists suspect that SV40 can inflict damage and then disappear completely, in what is described as a “hit-and-run” attack. This analogy is lent credence by a recent German study in which rat cells were infected with SV40 and transformed into cancer cells. When scientists searched for large T-antigen, it was no longer present in some of the cells. Further, these cells appeared to be even more malignant than those that were still expressing the protein, because the immune system could no longer recognize them as a threat.

The new theory may explain how SV40 and perhaps other viruses can induce cancer and yet not be readily detectable once tumors start proliferating rapidly. But that notion runs counter to traditional scientific thinking about cancer. “As a geneticist, I would like to see every single cell have evidence of the virus,” Testa says, noting that the hit-and-run theory must still be proved. But, Testa observes, “This is an area that’s going to perhaps establish a new paradigm.”

Although Carbone’s T-antigen research has bolstered his contention that the SV40 found in human tumors is not simply a passenger virus, until recently he had no answer to a criticism commonly voiced by those skeptical that the polio vaccine could be linked to cancer: some of the SV40 he and others have isolated in human tumors has a crucial genetic difference from the virus that contaminated the polio vaccine. The SV40 that its discoverers isolated from the polio vaccine in 1960 had a genetic feature that allowed it to replicate more quickly than the SV40 subsequently found in human bone and brain cancers and in most monkeys. That led some to question the idea that the SV40 that researchers were finding in these tumors was related to the SV40 in the polio vaccine.

To settle the issue Carbone sought to examine old vaccine stocks. He was told by government and drug-company officials that they had thrown out all the old lots. Then, two years ago, Carbone found an elderly Chicago-area physician who had an unopened case of polio vaccine from 1955, which he had stored in his refrigerator for more than forty years. “I would have gone all the way to Alaska to find this stuff, and here it was three miles away,” Carbone says. Last summer Carbone finally completed tests on the vintage vaccine. He found that the tiny vials contained SV40 genetically identical to the strains found in human bone and brain tumors and in monkeys. “This proves that the SV40 that was present in the polio vaccine is identical to the SV40 we are finding in these human tumors,” he says. Why was the SV40 isolated from the 1960 vaccine the faster-growing version? Because, Carbone says, both kinds occurred in the monkey kidneys used to grow the

vaccine. Carbone and Janet Butel say that the SV40 that grew more quickly might have had an advantage in cell cultures—perhaps explaining why it was the strain originally isolated from the vaccine. However, the slower-growing virus would almost certainly have an advantage in tumor formation, because it would be less likely to be detected by the immune system.

Because he believed that the slower-growing SV40 was more likely to induce tumors, Carbone wanted to see if feder-

Since Carbone published his first study, scientists at seventeen major laboratories have confirmed his research with respect to the presence of SV40 in human mesothelioma tumors. The virus has also been located in other kinds of tumors. More than a dozen laboratories have found SV40 in bone and brain tumors. It has been found in pituitary and thyroid tumors.

ally mandated vaccine-screening tests for viruses were adequate to detect it. Vaccine manufacturers are not required to use state-of-the-art molecular techniques—PCR, for example—for virus detection. Instead they rely on ordinary light-microscope examination to look for evidence of cellular damage by viral contaminants after fourteen-day cycles in tissue culture. Although the current screening protocols—themselves forty years old—are, according to Carbone, more than adequate to detect the faster-growing form of SV40, his tests found that the slower-growing SV40 took at least nineteen days to grow out, and thus wouldn’t be detected in the fourteen-day screening cycles. Carbone says his experiments suggest that any slow-growing SV40 present in the vaccine after the early 1960s could have gone undetected.

Carbone recently tested six vials of polio vaccine manufactured in 1996, and found that they were negative for SV40. He concludes that the colonies of monkeys used today must be free of the virus, because if slow-growing strains were present, the tests used for routine screening would not detect them. (Today’s injected vaccine is produced on monkey cell lines, and is therefore free of any viral contaminants, whereas the oral vaccine is still produced on actual kidneys. Under Centers for Disease Control regulations that went into effect last month, American children should now receive only injected vaccine.) In a paper on his tests of vaccines Carbone recommends conducting extensive molecular testing of polio-vaccine stocks from the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s to look for the slower-growing SV40. The issue is more than academic: the results would help to establish whether SV40 is present in young children today as a result of continued exposure to contaminated vaccine or as a result of human-to-human transmission based on the original, 1955–1963 exposure.

A Study Plagued by Strife

DESPITE the accumulating evidence of SV40's association with human tumors, the NCI has been preoccupied with determining whether the virus is even present in human tumors. For more than two years the NCI's chief focus with respect to SV40 was the design and administration of a multi-laboratory study whose stated purpose was to assess whether PCR was a reliable tool for identifying the presence of SV40 in human tissue. Critics of the study, including scientists at some of the participating labs, worried that other agendas

WALKING WITH WALTER

for my father

Walter wants to know how I am doing
so far, what I think of this and that.
It's a simple gift to be in the beam
of Walter's interest. And there's something
of the dignitary in Walter's way
with people, crossbred as it is with the absent mind
of the professor and the sure hand of the gentleman
farmer (straight out of some lesser-known
Frost poem). A soul emissary, then, who
at present—as we pass up through
the bristling pines, along a New England
stone wall—is asking about my father,
recently dead, about how it has been
dealing with the aftermath and all
the troubled souls that end up at the door
of the dead poet's house uninvited.
He seems to understand: brother, father,
teacher—yes, even son. He's that good
at listening. And listening, too, for some echo
out of the forest, some crow flap to awaken
an answer (in me?). He just nods. We keep walking,
and as we go forward, me conjuring my
love for my father, I feel some hidden part
dislodge, take wing, fly up
to join the crow in the late-afternoon haze—
my body moving onward with Walter, as lightly
as cumulus clouds passing soundlessly over water.

—SEBASTIAN MATTHEWS

were involved. The study was directed by Howard Strickler and overseen by James Goedert. Nine labs participated in the study, including those of Keerti Shah, at Johns Hopkins; Bharat Jasani, at the University of Wales; and Janet Butel, at Baylor, but not Carbone's. The study, which was planned and administered by the NCI's Viral Epidemiology Branch, had a fairly unusual design. Instead of just seeing whether different labs could replicate one another's work, as is usually done, the labs were asked to prove that they could replicate their own work. Each lab was given a variety of samples from unidentified human mesothelioma tissues and asked to see if it could find SV40 DNA. Then it was asked to find SV40 DNA again in masked samples from the same tumor tissue.

We asked Richard Klausner, the director of the NCI, about his views on SV40 and about the design of the experiment. Klausner said that the research to date hadn't quelled his doubts that SV40 is present in human tumor tissue, and he questioned the reliability of the techniques that Carbone and others have been using. "These sorts of molecular technologies are wonderful tools but very complicated and sometimes misleading to use," Klausner said. "I think there is very good reason to question whether there has been the development of adequate standards or probes, PCR probes," for detecting the virus.

Like Strickler and James Goedert, Klausner raised the possibility of contamination to explain the positive findings of dozens of laboratories. "I do not see any compelling molecular data" to support the association of SV40 with human tumors, he told us. "In the absence of compelling clinical or epidemiological data, it's very difficult to say this looks like a pressing problem." We asked him about the many molecular studies, from numerous independent laboratories around the world, that had identified SV40 in human tumors. "There's too much irreproducibility and too many good explanations for artifact," he said. Klausner told us that the NCI has taken "an open approach but a critical one" to the notion that SV40 is associated with human tumors, and he insisted that it is seriously studying the issue. Michele Carbone's work, for instance, has been funded by the NCI. (Carbone is also funded by the American Cancer Society.)

We asked Klausner to explain why the Viral Epidemiology Branch had directed the multi-laboratory molecular-biology study, especially given that neither Strickler nor the head of the branch, Goedert, has a strong background in the field. Why hadn't he tapped an NCI division with more expertise in DNA extraction, sequencing, and characterization? "Their expertise in viruses and virus-associated disease makes [the Viral Epidemiology Branch] really the right place to do it. . . . As an expert in doing this sort of work, I feel that I can make that decision and I feel very comfortable with the decision," Klausner said. "What we are trying to do is establish some agreed-upon probes and standards that independent laboratories could utilize to provide ways of either validating or not validating molecular findings."

On another issue, Klausner referred to an epidemiological

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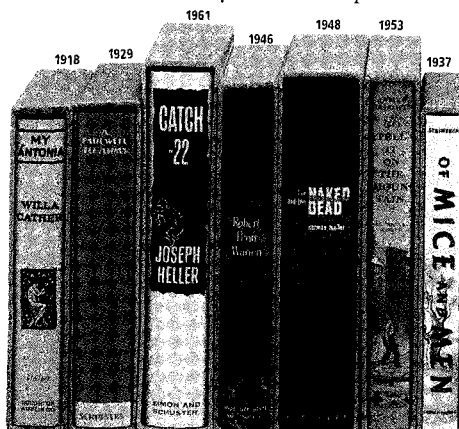
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study that Strickler had done to determine whether SV40 was linked to human cancer. That study appeared in 1998 in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, and received extensive publicity upon its release. It concluded that the NCI's database on cancer incidence shows no statistically significant correlation between exposure to SV40-contaminated vaccine and rates of cancer, including rarer cancers such as mesotheliomas, ependymomas, and osteosarcomas.

Strickler did find elevated cancer rates among those exposed to SV40, including a threefold increase in mesothelioma. Susan Fisher, an associate professor of epidemiology and biostatistics at Loyola, says that although the correlation Strickler found did not achieve statistical significance, it was at least "scientifically interesting." Strickler's study was "technically correct," Fisher says, but "it's hard to look at these numbers and turn around and say there is no evidence to suggest an association."

Moreover, Fisher says, standard epidemiological techniques may be useless in determining whether SV40 exposure is linked to higher cancer rates. If the research of Janet Buttel and others is correct and SV40 is now spreading among human beings, it may be impossible to assemble an experimental group that has never been exposed to SV40.

The multi-lab NCI study concluded with six of the nine laboratories detecting SV40 in some samples. However, only two of the labs got the same positive results on samples from the same tissues. Although the multi-lab study was completed at the end of 1998, at the time this article was written it had yet to be submitted for publication.

Memos sent to Strickler by some of the participating laboratories show that from its inception the study was plagued by considerable internal strife. (Participating laboratories we ap-

proached declined to share the memos or discuss them. We obtained them independently.) Two laboratories suggested that poor DNA-extraction techniques by the outside laboratory Strickler had chosen to provide the DNA samples were to blame for the largely negative results obtained. Their concerns were heightened when it was learned that the contractor had contaminated some of the negative controls.

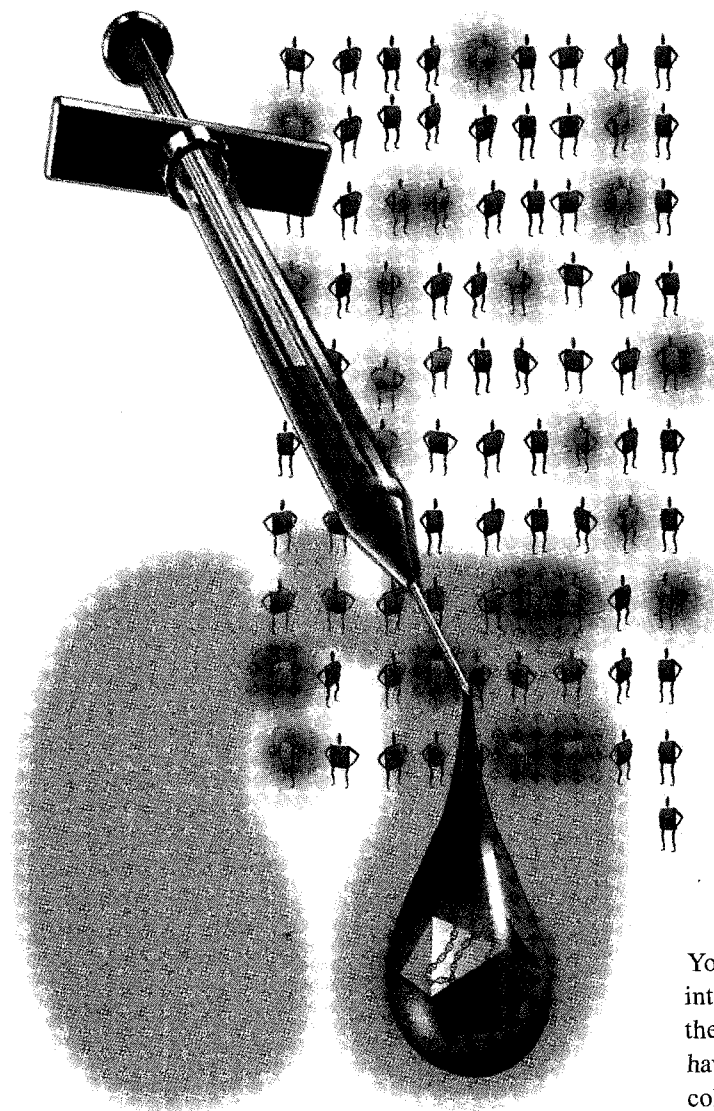
They also complained that Strickler was wrongly using the study to imply that previous positive findings were caused

by contamination. "It cannot be that all of these laboratories are contaminated and that contamination always happens in mesotheliomas, osteosarcomas and brain tumors, while the negative controls are always negative," a scientist from one of the laboratories wrote Strickler. "Contamination is a random event. . . . [The] flaws and unresolved scientific issues . . . have become so cumulative as to outweigh any positive scientific benefit which might be derived from the publication of this study." From another laboratory came this objection: "We feel that our comments about data interpretation are being dismissed and ignored.

Your intransigence about the interpretation of the data and the conclusions of the study have forced us to admit that the collegiality and the scientific collaboration that was the basis of this study is very strained."

Both laboratories maintained that Strickler's draft manuscript summarizing the study results was wrong in asserting that contamination was the cause of previous SV40 findings.

An unlikely ally in the laboratories' cause has been William Egan, the acting head of the Food and Drug Administration's Office of Vaccines Research and Review. Egan believes there is no strong epidemiological proof that SV40 is associated with human cancers and emphasizes that the current polio vaccine is free of SV40. However, he says, there is evidence that



the virus may well be present in some tumor samples. After he had reviewed Strickler's draft manuscript, last February, Egan wrote a lengthy letter to Strickler criticizing it. "I think that this paragraph, and the following paragraph, imply, unintentionally so, that the positive results [of SV40 in tumors] that have been reported are due to laboratory contamination; I do not think that this should be implied." Strickler responded, "This study would not have been conducted if there was not some doubt. That point must be made and made clearly."

Later Egan chided Strickler about another section of his draft, which stated, "This multi-institutional study failed to demonstrate the reproducible detection of SV40 in human mesotheliomas." Egan wrote,

More exactly, it failed to demonstrate SV40 sequences in *this set* of mesotheliomas. This is not inconsistent with SV40 being found by others previously. Indeed, the fact that laboratories that previously found SV40 in their samples do not now find SV40 in these samples (and get the study controls correct) only lends credence to their previous findings. . . . These laboratories are able to find SV40 when it is there, and do not find it when it is not there.

Frustrated by continuing objections, Goedert and Strickler considered publishing the study without the approval of the dissenting labs, but that plan was dropped. Last September an independent arbitrator was called in to rewrite Strickler's manuscript. The dissenters apparently gained some ground. The arbitrator made major changes in its tone and conclusions. The study now states that "laboratory contamination was unlikely to have been the source of SV40 DNA" found in human tumors in previous experiments (by Butel, Jasani, and the other participating labs).

The Search for a Vaccine

THIRTY miles north of Venice, in the seaside resort town of Lignano Sabbiadoro, 200 clinicians and researchers are gathered at the international Conference on Malignant Pleural Mesothelioma. At a similar conference in Paris five years ago Carbone startled his audience when he presented his first SV40 paper.

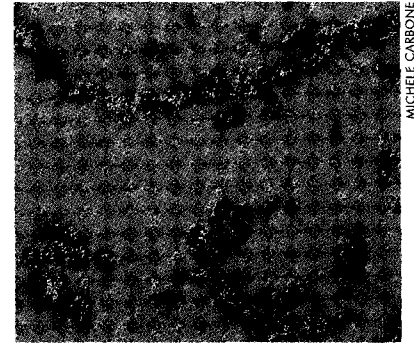
Today a significant portion of the conference is devoted to SV40's association with mesothelioma—testament to a sea change among researchers regarding the simian virus. Brooke Mossman, the director of the environmental-pathology program at the University of Vermont, was the first scientist to tease out the complex molecular pathways by which asbestos disrupts cellular regulatory mechanisms and causes mesothelioma. She has been impressed by Carbone's work. At Lignano she and Carbone are co-chairing a panel on the molecular pathways employed by asbestos and SV40 which lead to tumor development. In another presentation Luciano Mutti, a researcher at the Salvatore Maugeri Foundation's Institute for Research and Care, in Pavia, will report that mesothelioma

patients who test positive for SV40 have a shorter life-span than those who test negative.

At the moment the floor belongs to David Schrump, the new chief of thoracic surgery at the NCI. Schrump matter-of-factly announces the results of a series of experiments he has just completed. When he "turned off" SV40 large T-antigen, he says, human-mesothelioma cell cultures that contained the virus stopped proliferating and started to die. Schrump explains that he undertook the experiment partly because he was skeptical of SV40's role in the development of mesothelioma. He and his team assembled human mesotheliomas that tested positive for SV40 and then devised a genetic bullet, a strand of RNA called an "antisense," which would prevent the expression of SV40 large T-antigen.

Within days after the antisense was administered to the cancer cultures, Schrump found, the growth rates of mesotheliomas with SV40 in them dropped dramatically; the negative controls were unaffected. One important finding was that even very low levels of SV40 appeared to be biologically important—a discovery that speaks to Strickler's objection about the low levels of SV40 often found in tumor tissue. Schrump's study was published late last year in *Cancer Research*.

Another study in that same issue also supports the idea that SV40 is actively involved in mesothelioma. Adi Gazdar is a professor of pathology and the deputy director of the Hamon Cancer Center, at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center. He originally doubted Carbone's work on SV40. "Here's a monkey virus suddenly popping up in a rare tumor—I was skeptical of the data," he told us. So Gazdar devised an experiment that could determine at one stroke whether the SV40 found in tumors was a lab contaminant and whether the virus is involved in tumor formation. Gazdar used a technique called laser microdissection to separate cancerous cells from nearby noncancerous ones. He found SV40 in more than half of the mesothelioma tumors. He also found the virus in some adjacent pre-cancerous cells. Significantly, 98 percent of nearby noncancerous cells tested negative for SV40. "That rules out any contamination," Gazdar says, "because if a specimen was contaminated, the SV40 would be in all parts of the specimen—it wouldn't be localized to the mesothelium alone." Moreover, Gazdar says, his study "suggests that the virus is in the right type of cells many years before they become malignant"—evidence that SV40 contributes to the development of cancer. Gazdar says of Carbone's work, "I feel everything he's said, I've been able to confirm, and more."



Malignant cells fluoresce with evidence of SV40's messenger RNA

Gazdar and other scientists believe that the time has come for a major federal funding initiative on SV40 to better understand who is infected, how the virus works, and what might be done to prevent disease. "There's still a lot we don't know about the basic biology of this virus in human infections, including what tissues it infects, how it is transmitted, and when people become infected with it," Janet Butel says. "Until more studies are done, we don't know if we're looking at the only

explanation. It cites Strickler's work by name but not that of Carbone, Butel, or Testa.

Some researchers plan to conduct screenings for the virus. Joseph Testa hopes to initiate a screening program at Fox Chase's new cancer-prevention pavilion that focuses on asbestos exposure. He is collaborating with officials from the Asbestos Workers Local 14, in Philadelphia, to identify people who are particularly at risk. Carbone applauds that effort. "If

you test positive for this virus, you should not be anywhere near asbestos," he says. Bharat Jasani, who has found SV40 DNA in a high percentage of the British mesotheliomas he examined, has begun testing British and Canadian mesothelioma patients, at their request. He hopes they may be candidates for future SV40-targeted therapy.

Last year scientists reported that a vaccine they had developed targeting large T-antigen appeared to help prevent and reverse tumors expressing

large T-antigen in mice. Carbone and Harvey Pass, who is now the chief of thoracic oncology at the Karmanos Cancer Institute, at Wayne State University, in Detroit, are collaborating with Martin Sanda and Michael Imperiale, of the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor, who are among the vaccine's developers. They hope soon to bring the experimental vaccine to Phase I clinical trials, in which it will be tested for its safety in human beings, though not yet for whether it works. Even if the vaccine eventually proves effective in human beings, years may well pass before it is widely available.

In an age of uncontrolled AIDS in Asia and Africa, rampant tuberculosis in Russia, and antibiotic-resistant microbes in American hospitals, does SV40 really warrant a significant public-health response? There is no doubt, Carbone says, that the virus is linked to some cancers. What's more, millions of Americans now have been exposed to the virus. Studying SV40 may teach us something about the dangers of cross-species infection at a time when the use of animal tissue for medical purposes is gaining acceptance.

Good science is ultimately about the exchange of ideas unfettered by presuppositions. Sometimes great breakthroughs come out of theories that at first seemed heretical or even nonsensical. "Can you think of anything more different on earth than asbestos and a monkey virus?" Carbone says. "Yet you stick them together and they work together to be more deadly than either one of them is alone." He goes on, "This research is important in so many different ways. It's not just about SV40 and mesothelioma. It helps us understand the whole picture of how viruses interact with environmental carcinogens. This research can help us understand how completely unrelated carcinogens can work together in causing disease—a mystery we have barely begun to unravel." ☛

Health officials stress that before SV40 in the polio vaccine can be linked to cancer, the proposition must clear important hurdles. It must be shown that the SV40 in tumors is not a laboratory contaminant. It must be shown that SV40 is responsible for the cellular damage that leads to cancer. And, of course, it must be shown that the SV40 was introduced through the vaccine.

types of cancers that have an association with SV40," she says of the lung, bone, and brain cancers with which SV40 has been associated most often. "Maybe these are just the ones we've recognized so far. There may be others people haven't run across." Gazdar says, "It's such a crucial issue. Possibly millions of people are sitting with this virus in their mesothelium or other tissues and are at risk for developing cancers." Cancers that were once rare "may suddenly become not so rare," he says. "I think it's an enormous potential health problem."

Arnold Levine, of The Rockefeller University, is not convinced that the virus causes cancer in human beings, but he, too, believes that the discovery of SV40 in human tumors warrants a serious federal response. "If it's part of the cause of a disease," he says, "it has a significance in public health and I think we ought to find that out. That's a good reason to spend taxpayers' money: to do science to find out whether the public health is really monitored here properly. I think that maybe there's enough evidence in the literature now that the National Cancer Institute ought to put out an RFA." The reference is to a Request for Applications, the formal process by which the federal agency identifies a major health-research initiative and invites scientists to apply for research funds. "That would stimulate people to come in and design experiments and replicate these things." Carbone made the same suggestion to federal health officials in 1997 but was rebuffed.

Like the NCI, the Atlanta-based Centers for Disease Control maintains a stance of neutrality with undertones of skepticism. In a four-page fact sheet called "Questions and Answers on Simian Virus 40 (SV40) and Polio Vaccine" the CDC notes that SV40 has been found in some tumors and adds that "more research is needed" to confirm a causative link with human disease. It also raises the possibility of contamination as an

The Generation Gap

by NADINE GORDIMER

Their father, their affectionate,
loyal, considerate father, announces that he has left
their mother for another woman

HE was the one told: James, the youngest of them. The father to the son—and it was Jamie, with whom he hadn't gotten on since Jamie was a kid; Jamie, who ran away when he was an adolescent, was brought back resentful, nothing between them but a turned-aside head (the boy's) and a tight, tolerant jaw of suppressed disapproval (the father's). Jamie, who is doing—what is it now? Running a cybersurfers' restaurant with a friend—that's the latest. He has done so many things, but the consensus in the family is that he's the one who has done nothing with his life. His brother and sisters love him but see it as a waste: of charm and some kind of ill-defined talent, sensed but not directed in any of the ways they recognize.

So it was from Jamie that they received the *announcement*. The father had it conveyed by Jamie to them—Virginia, Barbara, and Matthew called at some unearthly hour in Australia. The father has left the mother.

A husband leaves his wife: it is one of the most unexceptional of events. The father has left the mother: that is a completely different version, their version.

A husband leaves his wife for another woman. Of course. Their father, their affectionate, loyal, considerate father, *announces*, just like that: he has left their mother for another woman. Inconceivable.

And to have chosen, of all of them, the younger brother as confidant, confessor, messenger—whatever the reasoning was.

They talked to one another on the telephone, calls those first few days frustratingly blocked while numbers were being dialed simultaneously and the occupied whine sounded on and on. Matthew, in Brisbane, sent an e-mail. They got together in Barbara's house—their father's Ba, his favorite. Even Jamie appeared, summoned for an explanation he could not give.

Why should I ask why, how?

Or would not give. *He* must have said something beyond this announcement; but no. And Jamie had to get back to the bar nook and the espresso machine, leave them to their talk,

with his archaic smile of irresponsible comfort in any situation.

And suddenly, from the door: We're all grown up now—even he.

No one had heard from the mother. Ginnie had called her and waited to see if she would say anything, but she chatted about the grandchildren and the progress of a friend she had been visiting in the hospital. Not a word. Perhaps she doesn't know. But even if he kept the affair somehow secret from her until now, he would hardly "inform" his children before telling his wife of a decision to abandon her.

Perhaps she thinks we don't know.

No, can't you see—she doesn't want us to know, because she thinks he'll come back, and we need never know. A private thing. As Jamie said.



That's ridiculous; she's embarrassed, ashamed, I don't know what—humiliated at the idea of us . . .

Ginnie had to intervene as chairperson to restore clarity in the spurting crisscross of sibling voices. Now what do we do? What are we talking about? Are we going to try and change his mind? Talk some sense into him? Are we going to go to her?

We must. First of all.

Then Ba should go.

One would have thought that Ba was the child he'd turn to. She said nothing, stirred in her chair, and took a gulp of gin and tonic with a pull of lip muscles at its kick. There was no need to ask *Why me?* because she's her daddy's favorite, she's closest to him, the one most likely to understand, if anyone can, what led him to do what he has done—to himself, to their mother.

And the woman? The voices rise as a temperature of the room: What about the woman? Anybody have any idea who she might be? None of those wives in their circle of friends—it's Alister, Ginnie's husband, considering. Just look at them. Your poor dad.

But where did he and she ever go where he'd meet anyone new?

Well, *she'll* know who it is. Ba will be told.

Nothing sure about that.

As the youngest of them said, they're all grown up. Two among the three present (and that's not counting sports commentator Matthew, in Brisbane) know how affairs may be and are concealed; only if they take the place of the marriage do they have to be revealed.

SICK. *That's what it is. He's sick.*

Ba—all of them waited for Ba to deal with her—expected tears and heartbreak to burst the conventions that protect the intimacy of the parents' marriage from their sons and daughters. But there are no tears.

Derision and scorn from their mother become the discarded wife. Indeed she knows who the woman is. A pause, as if the daughter, not the mother, were the one who must prepare herself.

She's exactly your age, Ba.

And the effect is what the mother must have counted on as part of the kind of triumph she has set herself to make of the disaster, deflecting it onto the father. The woman has a child, has never been married. Do? Plays the fiddle in an orchestra. How and where he found her, God only knows—you know we never go to concerts; he has his CD collection here in this room. Everything's been just as usual while it's been going on—he says, very exact—for eight months. So when he finally had the courage to come out with it, I told him, Eight months after forty-two years, you've made your choice. May he survive it.

When I said (Ba is reporting), Doesn't sound as if it will work for him, it's just an episode, something he's never tried, never done, a missing experience, he'll come back to his life (of course that would be the way Ba would put it), she said, I won't give it back to him. I can't tell you what she's like. It's as if the place they were in together—not just the house—is barricaded. She's in there, guns cocked.

What can they do for her, their mother, who doesn't want sympathy, doesn't want reconciliation brokered even if it were possible, doesn't want the healing of their love, any kind of love, if the love of forty-two years doesn't exist.

HIS Ba offers to bring the three available of his sons and daughters together again to meet him at her house, but he tells her he would rather "spend some time" with each separately. She is the last he comes to, and his presence is strange, both to him and to her. How can it be otherwise? When he sleeps with the woman, she could be his daughter. It's as if something forbidden has happened between him and his favorite child. Something unspeakable exists.

Ba has already heard it all before—all he will allow himself to tell—from the others. Same story to Ginnie and Jamie and, according to an e-mail from Matthew, much the same in a "bloody awful" call to him. Yes, she is not married; yes, she plays second violin in a symphony orchestra; and yes, she is thirty-five years old. He looks up slowly, and he gives his daughter this fact as if he must hold her gaze and she cannot let hers waver: a secret between them. So she feels able to ask him what the others didn't, perhaps because the inquiry might somehow imply acceptance of the validity of happenstance in the preposterous decision of a sixty-seven-year-old to overturn his life. How did he meet this woman?

He shapes that tight, tolerant jaw, now not of disapproval (he has no right to that in these circumstances) but of hurt resignation to probing: On a plane. On a plane! The daughter cannot show her doubtful surprise; when did he ever travel without the mother? He continues, feeling himself pressed to it: he went to Cape Town for negotiations with principals from the American company who didn't have time to come to him up in Pretoria. The orchestra was going to the coast to open a music festival. He found her beside him. They got talking, and she kindly offered to arrange a seat for him at the oversubscribed concert. And then? And then? But her poor father—she couldn't humiliate him, couldn't follow him, naked, the outer-inner man she'd never seen, through the months in the woman's bed beside the violin case.

What are you going to do? she asked.

It's done.

That's what he said (the siblings compare notes). And he gave such explanation as he could. Practical. I've moved out—but Isabel must have told you. I've taken a furnished flat. I'll leave the number—I'd rather you didn't call at the office at present.

And then? What will happen to you, my poor father? But all she said was, So you want to marry this girl? For in comparison with his mate, his wife of forty-two years, and with his sixty-seven years, she is no more than that.

I'll never marry again.

Yes, he told the others that too. Is the vehemence a matter of prudence (the huge age difference, for God's sake: Matthew, from Australia), or is it telling them something about the marriage that produced them, some parental sorrow they weren't aware of while in the family home, or ignored, too preoccupied with their own hived-off lives to bother with, after?

Nothing is wrong between Isabel and me, but for a very long time nothing has been right either.

Wishing you every happiness. The wedding-gift maxim. Grown apart? Put together mistakenly in the first place? They're all of them too close to the surface marriage created for them—in self-defense and in protection of *them*, the children, no doubt—to be able to speculate.

And what is going to happen to our mother, your Isabel?

AND then. And then. That concert, after the indigestion of a three-hour lunch and another three hours of business-speak wrangling with those jocular sharks from Seattle. Mahler's Symphony No. 1 following Respighi. I've forgotten there's no comparison between listening to recorded music in a room filled with family things—the photographs, the glass, the coffee cup in your hand, the chair that fits you—and hearing music live. Seeing it as well, that's the difference, because acoustically reproduction these days is excellent—I know I used to say that listening to recordings was better than the bother of driving to concerts. Watching the players, how they're creating what you're hearing, their movements, their breathing, their expressions of concentration, even the way they sit, swaying in obedience to the conductor—he's a magician transforming their bodies into sound. I don't think I took particular notice of her. Maybe I did without knowing it; these things are a human mystery, I've realized. But that would have been that—she'd told me her name, but I didn't know where she lived, so I wouldn't even have known where to thank her for the concert reservation—if it hadn't been that she was on the plane again the next day, when I was returning home. We were seated in the same row, both aisle seats, separated this time only by that narrow gap we naturally could talk across. About the concert, what it was like to be a musician—people like myself are always curious about artists. She was teasing, saying we regard theirs as a free, undisciplined life compared with being, as I am, a businessman, but it was a much more disciplined life than ours—the rehearsals, the performance, the “red-eye night work, endless overtime” she called it, while we others have regular hours and leisure. We had the freebie drink together and a sort of mock argument about stress—hers facing an audience and knowing she'd get hell afterward if she played a wrong note, and mine with the example of the principals from Seattle the day before. The kind of exchange you hear strangers making on a plane, and that I always avoid.

I avoid now talking about her to my children—what can you call sons and daughters who are far from children? I know they think it's ridiculous—it's all ridiculous to them—but I don't want anyone running around making “inquiries” about her, her life, as if her “suitability” is an issue that has anything to do with them. But of course everything about what I suppose must be called this affair has to do with them, because it's their mother, someone they've always seen—will see—as the other half of me. They'll want to put me together again.

THE children (he's right—what do you call a couple's grown-up children?) often had let weeks go by without meeting one another or getting in touch. Ginnie is a lecturer in the math department at the university, and her husband is a lawyer; their friends are fellow academics and lawyers, with a satisfying link between the two in concern over the need for a powerful civil society to protect human rights. Their elder son and daughters are almost adults, and they have a latecomer, a four-year-old boy. Ba is barren. Ginnie is the repository of this secret of her childlessness. Ba and her husband live in the city as week-long exiles from the bush. Carl was the manager of a wildlife reserve when she fell in love with him; he now manages a clothing chain store, and she is personal secretary to a stockbroker. Every weekend they are away, camping and walking, incommunicado with human beings, animal watching, bird watching, insect watching, plant identifying, returned to the lover-arms of the veld. As Ginnie and Alister have remarked, if affectionately, her sister and brother-in-law are more interested in bucks and beetles than in any endangered human species. Jamie—to catch up with him, except at Christmas! He was always all over the place, other than where you would expect to find him. And Matthew: he was the childhood and adolescence photographs displayed in the parents' house, and a commentator's voice broadcasting a test cricket match from Australia in which quirks of home pronunciation came and went like the fading and return of an unclear line.

Now they are in touch again as they have not been since a time, times, they wouldn't remember or would remember differently, each according to a need that made this sibling then seek out that while avoiding the others.

Ginnie and Ba even meet for lunch. It's in a piano bar cum bistro with deep armchairs and standing lamps that fan a sunset light to the ceiling beneath which you eat from the low table at your knees. A most unlikely place to be chosen by Ba, who picks at the spicy olives and *peri-peri* cashew nuts as if she were trying some unfamiliar seed come upon in the wild; but she has suggested the place because she and Carl don't go to restaurants and it's the one she knows of because her stockbroker asks her to make bookings there for him. When the sisters meet, they don't know where to begin. The weeks go by; when the phone rings and (fairly regularly, duty-bound) it's the father or (rarely; she's in a mood in which duty is seen to be a farce) the mother, the siblings have a high moment. It could be another announcement—that it is over, *he's* back, she's given his life back to him, the forty-two years. But no, no.

May he survive. That's the axiom the daughters and sons have, ironically, taken from her. Who is this woman who threatens it?

Her name is Alicia (affected choice on the part of whoever engendered her?), surname Parks (commonplace enough, which explains a certain level of origin perhaps?). She was something of a prodigy for as long as childhood lasted, but has not fulfilled this promise and has ended up second vio-

linist in a second-best symphony orchestra—so rated by people who really know music. Which the father, poor man, doesn't—just his CD shelf in the living room, for relaxation with his wife at home in the evenings. The woman's career will have impressed him. Those who can, play; those who can't, listen; *he* and Isabel.

What happened to the man, father of the child? Has their father a rival? Is he a hopeful sign? Or—indeed—is he a threat, a complication in the risk the darling, crazy sixty-seven-year-old is taking? Next he'll be mixed up in some *crime passionnel*. But Jamie, captured for drinks at Ginnie's house, laughs—Daddy-O, right on, the older man has appeal! And Jamie's the one who does what as youngsters they called "picking up stompies"—cigarette butts of information and gossip. The child's father lives in London; he's a journalist, and he's said to be a Coloured. So the little boy to whom *he* must be playing surrogate father is a mixed-blood child, twice or thrice diluted, since the father might be heaven knows what concoction of human variety.

At least that shows this business has brought progress in some way. Ginnie is privately returning to something in her own experience of the parental home which only one other sibling (Matthew) happens to know about. The parents always affirmed that they were not racist and brought up their children that way. So far as they felt they could without conflict with the law of the time. Ginnie, as a student, had had a long love affair with a young Indian, who was admitted to study at the white university on a quota. She never could tell the parents. When it came to a daughter or son of their own . . .

The fact of the child obviously doesn't matter to *him* now. Of course the mother, in her present mood, if she gets to hear . . .

Ginnie was at a door of the past, opening contiguous to the present. You never know about anything like that. Principles. Look at me. I wear a ribbon in support of no discrimination against AIDS victims, but what if I found that the woman who takes care of my kid was HIV-positive—would I get rid of her?

Alister, merely a husband among them, had something to say to the siblings. The matter of the child might be an added attraction for him. The rainbow child. Many people who meant well in the past now want some way to prove in practice the abstract positions they hid behind then. Of course, I don't know your father as well as you do.

His wife had something to add.

Or as we think we do.

BA did not speak much at these family meetings.

She is in a house with her father. The house is familiar to her, but it isn't either the family home or her own. Or maybe it's both—dreams can do these things. Just she and her father; she wonders why he's there in the middle of the day. He says he's waiting for the arrival of the maid. They hear the *tring-tring* of an old-fashioned bicycle bell, the kind they had on their bikes as children. She looks out the window. He's

standing behind her, and she sees—they see; she's aware he knows she's looking—a young and pretty redhead/blonde dismount from a bicycle, smiling. But no whites work as maids in this country.

GINNIE and Ba, not telling anyone else, go to a concert—seats chosen neither too near nor too far back. Yes, *she is there*, with the violin nestling between jaw and shoulder. They follow white hands doing different intricate things, some fingers depressing strings, those of the other hand folded around the bow. She wears the sort of informal evening dress the other women players in the orchestra wear: not quite a uniform, the equivalent of the not quite black-tie outfits the men players allow themselves—roll-collar shirts and colored cummerbunds. Some sort of fringed shawl slips off the side of the bowing arm. Apparently the dress is quite sexily décolleté. They'll verify when the orchestra rises at interval. She is certainly very slim; her left leg is stretched gracefully, and a lot of hair is piled on top of her head. Not blonde, not redhead. It's the color of every second woman's at present, an unidentifiable brown overlaid with a purplish shine of henna. She rests her bow, plays when summoned by the conductor; and they are summoned to listen to her. They feel she knows they are there, although she doesn't know them. *She's looking at them although blinded by the stage lights. She's playing to them.*

THE palm of the hand.

All that you go through in your life (sixty-seven years it's been) without knowing. Most of it you'll never suspect you lack, and it's pure chance if you come upon it. An ordinary short flight between one familiar city and another in daily, yearly time. The palm of a hand: that it can be so erotic. Its pads and valleys and lines to trace and kiss; she laughs at me and says they're lines of fortune, that's why I'm here with her. The palm that holds enfolds the rod of the bow and it sings. Enfolds holds me.

MATTHEW mustn't think he can stay out of it! They send him e-mail, dispatched by Ginnie but addressing him as from a collective "we"—the sisters and their husbands, the younger brother—who expect him to take part in decisions, whatever is to be done. Matthew writes, I suppose we gave them the general amount of trouble sons and daughters do. The parents, he means. And what is meant by that? What has that got to do with anything that can be done? What is he getting at? Is it that it's the parents' turn now? For God's sake, at their—at *his*—age! Or is it that because of their past youth the sons and daughters ought to understand the parents better? All these irrelevances (relevances? who knows?) come on, brought up by the one nice and far away among the cricket bats and kangaroos. What is there for Matthew to disinter?

He was always so uncomplicated, as far as they know, those who grew up close to him in the entanglements of a family. He never ran away from anything—unless you count Australia, where he has made what is widely recognized as a success.

The general amount of trouble. Jamie. And by the parents he's unlikely ever to be regarded as anything other than troubling. *As long as they're happy*, parents say of their engendered adults, swallowing dismay and disappointment. What



did the parents really know of what was happening to their young back then? Ginnie's Indian—the irony, she sees now, that it was *his* parents who found out about the affair and broke it off. Never mind falling in love, that kind of love was called miscegenation in those days, punishable by law, and would have put his studies at risk; his parents planned for him to be a doctor, not a lover—in prison. Ba's abortion. How *he* would have anguished over his favorite daughter if he had known. Only Ginnie knows that this botched back-room procedure is why Ba is childless. No one else—not Carl. It belongs to a life before Ba found him, her rare and only elect mate, come upon in the bush. It's unlikely that Jamie has a passing thought (in the reminder of the general amount of trouble they've given) for what he arranged for his frantic sister that time; even as a teenager he had precociously the kind of friends who were used to mutual efforts to get one another out of all manner of youthful trouble. Yes, it was Jamie—Jamie, of all of them—Ba had turned to, as it was Jamie, of all of them, her father had turned to in his trouble.

It became possible to have *him* to eat a meal at one or another of their homes, without the mother. As if it were normal. And not easy to convey to him implicitly that it was not—that his place at this table was not as a lover, his place here was as a husband with his wife, mother-and-father. This displacement did not apply to their mother, because she, as they saw it, was the victim of this invading lover in the family circle. She had agreed to come to them in her own right (so to speak) now and then, her carefully erected composure forbidding any discussion of the situation at table, and now she had gone to spend a holiday with her cousin, a consular official in Mauritius.

After a meal with her at Ginnie's house, one of them, a daughter or one of their husbands, insisted on a sense of real-

ity by bringing up the subject—the only subject. How did things stand now? Was any exchange of ideas, say, about the future, going on between *him* and her?

Her lawyer had met him, and an allowance for her had been arranged; other matters remained to be cleared up. Possessions. These were not specified, as if the issue had nothing to do with anyone but herself. It was Carl who was able to say, out of his privileged innocence, close to nature's organic cycles of change and renewal, *Maybe your absence will be the right thing. For both of you. When you come back, you may find you can work things out again together.*

She looked at him half pityingly, for his concern.

Things are worked out. It was his work.

And she turned away *as of her right* to grandmotherly talk with Ginnie's small boy, for whom she had brought a model jeep, and then to a low exchange in intimate tones with her favorite, the elder of the two teenage daughters, who happened to be at home in the family that evening. No boyfriends around tonight? Usually when I come at the weekend, I hear a lot of music and laughing going on upstairs. Helen's friends, the girl says. And not yours, not your type—I understand. What's your type? All right, *the* one, then—I have a pretty good idea of what would interest you, you know.

And the girl lies, describing the nonexistent one as she thinks an adult would wish him to be.

When the mother-grandmother had left, Ginnie's husband, Alister, told them, Isabel thinks we're on *his* side, that's the problem.

Why should we be? Nobody takes up Ba's statement.

May he survive.

BEST of all. Early in the morning, some days, to wake to the sound of a key turning in the lock—her key. Hear it but not sufficiently awake to open eyes, and a cold, fresh cheek is laid against the unshaven one. She has left her apartment before seven to deliver the child to nursery school, and now she's suddenly here. Yesterday. Heard her shoes drop and opened eyes to follow her clothes to the floor. She glides into bed; the cheek is still cold, and the rest of her is her special warmth. Not today, waiting for the key to turn. Tomorrow. Again it will turn. Again and again.

THEY broach to one another the obligation—the usefulness, perhaps—of inviting him to bring her along sometime. Sunday lunch? No—too familial a gesture, and Ba and Carl would not be there. Why should Ginnie and Alister deal with this on their own? You can't count on Jamie. Come by for a drink, sixish—that would do. What's she like—look like? The two men want to know in advance—after all, they are the father's fellow males—what to expect, in order to put themselves in his place. But the splash of stage lights drops a mask on faces; there were cave-hollows of eyes, white cheeks,

bright mouth. It was the hands in movement by which an identity was followed.

The man who brings her to Ginnie's house is another personage. Their father? He who always listened talks. Although this is not his home, he is not the host, he rises to refill glasses and offer snacks. He is courting her in front of them—they see it! Their mother is much better-looking, still beautiful; this one has a long, thin, voracious face. The light did not exaggerate its hollows, and her intelligently narrowed eyes—hazel? greenish? doesn't matter—are iconic with makeup in the style of Egyptian statues. She has chosen a loose but clinging tunic, and the sisters see that she has firm breasts. When they compare impressions later, it seems it was the women who noted this rather than, as they would have thought, the men. Her hands are unadorned (the mother has had gifts of beautiful rings from *him* over the years) and lie half curled, the palms half open on chair arm or lap; it's as if the hands' lack of tension is meant to put them at ease, these hands that make music. And pleasure their father. She has a voice with

what the women suspect is an adopted huskiness they believe men find attractive. It turns out that none of the men—Jamie was present—noticed this either as an affectation or an attraction *he* might have responded to.

The talk was quite animated and completely artificial; they were *all* other people, chatting about nothing that mattered to who and what they really were. There are so many harmless subjects; you really can get along in any situation by sticking to what has been in the newspapers and on television about floods or drought, the times of day to avoid driving in traffic congestion (keep off wars and politics, both local and international—those are intimate subjects), and, of course, music. It is the lover who brings that up; Ginnie and Ba would have preferred to keep off that, too. She might somehow sense how their eyes had been on her while she played. *He* even boasts about her: Alicia will go with the orchestra to an international music festival in Montreal in the winter, and it will be particularly enjoyable for her because Alicia also speaks fluent French. He might be—ought to be—boring someone with the

SNOW DAY

Today we woke up to a revolution of snow,
its white flag waving over everything,
the landscape vanished,
not a single mouse to punctuate the blankness,
and beyond these windows

the government buildings smothered,
schools and libraries buried, the post office lost
under the noiseless drift,
the paths of trains softly blocked,
the world fallen under this falling.

In a while I will put on some boots
and step out like someone walking in water,
and the dog will porpoise through the drifts,
and I will shake a laden branch,
sending a cold shower down on us both.

But for now I am a willing prisoner in this house,
a sympathizer with the anarchic cause of snow.
I will make a pot of tea
and listen to the plastic radio on the counter,
as glad as anyone to hear the news

that the Kiddie Corner School is closed,
the Ding-Dong School, closed,
the All Aboard Children's School, closed,
the Hi-Ho Nursery School, closed,
along with—some will be delighted to hear—

the Toadstool School, the Little School,
Little Sparrows Nursery School,
Little Stars Pre-School, Peas-and-Carrots Day School,
the Tom Thumb Child Center, all closed,
and—clap your hands—the Peanuts Play School.

So this is where the children hide all day,
These are the nests where they letter and draw,
where they put on their bright miniature jackets,
all darting and climbing and sliding,
all but the few girls whispering by the fence.

And now I am listening hard
in the grandiose silence of the snow,
trying to hear what those three girls are plotting,
what riot is afoot,
which small queen is about to be brought down.

—BILLY COLLINS

achievements of his seventeen-year-old granddaughter, Ginnie's eldest child. Ginnie's biological afterthought, four-year-old Shaun, had been playing with his jeep around everyone's feet. When the father and his woman were leaving, she bent to the child: I've got a little boy like you, you know. He has a collection of cars, but I don't think he has a jeep. Yours is great.

They are not embarrassed about anything, these lovers.

The new father of some other man's progeny makes a pledge for the rainbow child. We'll have to find one for him. Where did you get it?

Shaun asserts the presence not admitted to the drinks party. My grandmother did bring it for me.

A CURIOUS, almost shaming, moment comes to the siblings and husbands when they suddenly laugh about the whole business—mother, father, the woman. It begins to happen when they get together—less and less frequently—dutifully to try and decide yet again what they ought to be doing about it. The outbreak is akin to the hysterical giggle that sometimes accompanies tearful frustration. What can you do about papa in his bemused state? Oh, my God, next thing is he'll get her pregnant—he'll be Daddy all over again. No, no, no—spare us that! What do you mean, *no*?—presumably that's what it's all about, his pride in an old man's intact male prowess! And Alister, in an aside to Jamie, Apparently, he's still able to get it up—right on, as you would say. And they all lose control again. What is there to do with a mother who is unapproachable, who wants to be left alone like a sulky teenager, and a father who has broken loose like a youth sowing wild oats? Who could ever do anything with people in such conditions? Ah—but these are mature people! So nobody knows what maturity is, after all? Is that it? Not any longer, not anymore, now that the mother and the father have taken that away, certainly from their sons and daughters. Matthew calls and sends e-mail from his safe distance, reproaching: What is the matter with all of you? Why can't you get some reality into them, bring them together for what's left after their forty-two years? How else can this end?

Well, the mother seems to be making an extended holiday-of-a-lifetime out of the situation, and *he*, he's out of reach (spaced out: Jamie), dancing to a fiddle. Shaking their heads with laughter that dies in exasperation. There's *nothing* you can do with the parents.

Only fear for them. Ba's tears are not of laughter.

AT least adolescents grow up—that could be counted on to solve most of the general trouble they'd given. In the circumstance of parents it seems there isn't anything to be counted on, least of all the much-vaunted wisdom of old age. The mother wrote a long round-robin letter (copy to each

sibling, just a different name after “Dearest”) telling that she was going to Matthew, in Australia. So Mauritius had been halfway there, halfway from her rightful home, all along, in more than its geographical position across the Indian Ocean between Africa and Australia. She would “keep house” in Matthew's bachelor apartment while she looked for a new place of her own, with space enough for them to come and visit her. Send the grandchildren.

Alicia Parks, second violinist, did not return from Montreal. *He* continued to exchange letters and calls with her over many months. The family gathered this when he gave them news of her successes with the orchestra on tour—as if, whether this was of interest or welcome to them or not, they must recognize her as an extension of his life, and therefore of theirs. They could make up their minds about that.

What he did not tell them was that she had left the orchestra at the invitation of a Montreal chamber group. As first violinist: an ambition he knew she had and he wanted to see fulfilled for her. But Canada. She had taken into consideration (that was her phrase) that few such opportunities existed for her back in Africa.

With him. In his long late-night calls to her he completed, to himself, what she didn't say.

She sent for her child, telling him only after the child had left the country. Then she did not tell him that she was with someone other than her child, a new man, but he knew from her voice.

Ginnie came out with it to their father. Is she coming back?

When she gets suitable engagements here, of course. She has made a position for herself in the world of music.

So he's waiting for her, they decided, poor man. Why can't he accept that it's over, inevitably, put the whole thing behind him, come back to aging as a *father*, a dignified alternative to this disastrous regression to adolescence?

May he survive.

Together and individually, they are determined in pursuit of him.

THE best was the cold cheek. Just that. What alternative to that?

In the mirror in the bathroom, there was her body as she dried herself after the lovemaking bath together, toweling between her spread legs, and then across the back of her neck as beautifully as she bowed across the violin, steam sending trickles of her hair over her forehead. A mirror full of her. For me, old lover she knew how to love so well, so well, her old lover, sixty-seven. What alternative?

Death is a blank mirror, emptied of all it has seen and shown.

Death waits, was waiting, but I took the plane to Cape Town instead. ☼



Jazz—Religious and Circus

*If not exactly a golden age, the seventies was
a time of remarkable artistic ferment*

JULIUS Hemphill's *Blue Boyé* (Screwgun 70008), Arthur Blythe's *Lenox Avenue Breakdown* and *Illusions* (Koch Jazz KOC-

CD-7871 and -7869), and the anthology *Jazz Loft Sessions* (Douglas Music ADC3) are recent reissues from the late 1970s—a period I look back on as a fertile time

for jazz, though not many other people do. Nobody argued with the writer and photographer William P. Gottlieb when

by Francis Davis

he gave the name *The Golden Age of Jazz* to a 1979 collection of pic-

tures he had taken of musicians in nightclubs and other natural habitats over a nine-year period beginning in 1939. The

1940s, after all, were a decade in which, as Gottlieb reminisced in his foreword, "big-band jazz—mostly under the name *swing*—reached its peak," "bop and other modern jazz forms developed," and audiences were still able to hear the earliest forms of jazz "played by legendary musicians who had started blowing way back when jazz first began." To top it off, jazz was truly popular in the 1940s, even if Gottlieb did exaggerate slightly in calling this "the only time when popularity and quality have coincided; when, for once, the most widely acclaimed music was the best music."

Like Gottlieb's memories, his assembled photographs were especially beguiling at a time when jazz was slowly rebounding from various setbacks in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Being a young jazz fan had begun to feel awfully lonely; I speak from experience, hav-



ing started listening to jazz in 1964, as a high school senior. The writing was on the wall as early as 1957, in the Elvis Presley movie *Jailhouse Rock*. In one scene Presley's girlfriend (and business partner) takes the hero home to meet her upper-crust parents, who are gathered around the hi-fi with their other guests, listening to far-out jazz and debating how much atonality is too much. Asked his opinion as a professional musician, Presley sneers that he doesn't know what they're talking about and storms out the door.

In the mid-1950s acquiring a taste for "progressive" jazz, as exemplified by Stan Kenton and Dave Brubeck, or "cool" jazz, like that played by *Jailhouse Rock*'s fictional Stubby Wrightmeyer (modeled on Shorty Rogers?), was virtually a rite of passage for a certain type of male college student with horn-rimmed

glasses and intellectual aspirations. After the arrival of the Beatles that niche was filled by progressive rock.

By the mid-1960s, even if mainstream jazz was no longer a music of youthful rebellion, the jazz avant-garde could loudly claim to be the musical wing of a black political revolution. In his 1989 autobiography the trumpeter Miles Davis blamed the excesses of the avant-garde for the exodus of listeners from jazz—a common opinion, even if Davis himself thought that what was variously called "avant-garde," "free jazz," "the new thing," and "the new black music" was an attempt by white critics to detour audiences from *him*.

I remember thinking at the time that the avant-garde was merely a scapegoat. Its squalling improvisations undeniably presented difficulty for many listeners, as did its equation with black power in the minds of many of its leading figures and their champions in the jazz press (the most demagogic of whom were black, despite what Davis later asked readers to believe). But avant-gardes are *supposed* to rub people the wrong way. The avant-garde presented jazz with exciting tonal and rhythmic possibilities.

The jazz rank and file rejected these possibilities, however, in favor of the avant-garde's skeletal harmonic frameworks and a depoliticized version of its nationalistic message—almost as if to ensure boredom and white alienation. Too much jazz of the early 1970s consisted of what sounded like instrumental yodeling over a two-chord vamp, frequently accompanied by a lecture on the natural wonders of blackness, the confusing gist of which was likely to be that only blacks were culturally equipped to understand jazz and white people ought to be ashamed of themselves for not supporting it in greater numbers.

In emulation of John Coltrane, whose death, in 1967, had robbed jazz of the one figure respected by both the mainstream and the avant-garde, improvised solos became too long for even the most knowledgeable jazz fan to follow. Coltrane was an obsessive whose solos (unlike Louis Armstrong's or Charlie Parker's, or even Ornette Coleman's) were measured by the clock rather than by the chorus, sometimes running to forty minutes or longer.

He seemed to have enough at stake in them, either musically or emotionally, that listeners felt they had something at stake too. There was little possibility, though, of a similar vicarious involvement in the colorless droning of the many horn players who followed Coltrane's example but lacked his vast knowledge of harmony—and his charisma.

The real reason for the dwindling audience, it seemed to me, was mainstream jazz, by then called hard bop, which borrowed unwisely from both free jazz and rock-and-roll. Envious of rock's greater popularity, many jazz musicians naively assumed that the way to compete with rock was to use its hardware. The most annoying thing about the electric keyboards and basses on so many jazz albums of the early 1970s is that they hardly ever serve an organic purpose; they are there because they were briefly fashionable, like the floppy hats and bushy sideburns the musicians are shown wearing on the covers.

THE gravest problem facing jazz may have been an unavoidable consequence of its rapid evolution, which paralleled that of European concert music but at several times the pace. In his 1955 book *The Agony of Modern Music* the critic Henry Pleasants had outraged the classical-music establishment by siding with concert audiences that shied away from serialism and the like. As Pleasants saw it, these supposedly philistine audiences were exhibiting good taste in rejecting a European art-music tradition that had already reached a dead end with Schoenberg. The truly creative music of the twentieth century was jazz, which to Pleasants meant the songs of Irving Berlin and George Gershwin as well as the improvised solos of such early jazz musicians as Louis Armstrong and Sidney Bechet. By 1969, when he published his next broadside, *Serious Music—and All That Jazz!*, Pleasants had heard enough modern jazz, bebop and free, to know that jazz was experiencing its own agonies, largely as a consequence of severing its ties with pop.

Pleasants exaggerated the complexity of modern jazz and failed to take into account that by then pop meant rock-and-roll—a form of music that had little in

common rhythmically with jazz (a reason for the awkwardness of most “fusion,” a hybrid of jazz and rock introduced by Miles Davis and others in the late sixties). Even so, Pleasants was right to accuse jazz of compounding the mistakes of “serious” music in endeavoring to be taken seriously. Jazz had begun to ask much of its audience without delivering much in return. Bebop increasingly offered pleasure only in the virtuosity (or, usually, subvirtuosity) of its leading players; free jazz sometimes perversely denied audiences even that, substituting first its energy and then a quasi-spiritual vibe that epitomized a questionable trend.

Worse than overserious, jazz was becoming pious. Jazz can amount to a religion for those fans whose dedication to it becomes a ruling passion in their lives, often to the amusement of their unconverted family and friends. But that isn’t what I mean. An oppressive solemnity descended on the music itself, as musicians who embraced Islam or various alternative religions dragged their beliefs onstage with them, defining their music as simultaneously a manifestation of and a tribute to some higher power. Even fusion—a style that in its studied resemblance to rock-and-roll might have been expected to prize irreverence—suffered from piousness. Except for Miles Davis, who was a deity unto himself, every star of fusion seemed to give credit for his inspiration to one avatar of consciousness or another, whether it was the pianist Chick Corea with his L. Ron Hubbard or the guitarist Mahavishnu John McLaughlin with his Sri Chinmoy.

THINGS began looking up ever so slightly for jazz around the Bicentennial, and this upward trend—perhaps identifiable as such only in retrospect—lasted well into the eighties. Jazz remained commercially marginal; the signs of hope were in the music, not in its record sales or box-office receipts. No one burst onto the scene to alter the course of jazz almost single-handedly, as Louis Armstrong had in 1927, Charlie Parker in 1945, and Ornette Coleman in 1959, and the evidence began to suggest that no one ever would. In the absence of a new messiah the guiding principle became *diversity*—always a sign of well-being in the arts, if perplexing to those conditioned to measure jazz’s progress in terms of seismic disruptions.

The members of the Chicago-based Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians drifted almost en masse to New York, bringing with them ideas about the relationship between sound and silence which reanimated a moribund avant-garde. Ornette Coleman and the group Prime Time combined loopy funk polyrhythms with an arcane theory Coleman called “harmolodics,” arriving at the first synthesis of jazz and rock that didn’t smack of middle-aged panic or an attempt to make a quick buck. Dexter Gordon’s triumphant return from Europe and Art Blakey’s tireless leadership of the Jazz Messengers sparked a hard-bop revival, ultimately setting the stage for Wynton Marsalis. Art Pepper, released from prison in 1966, published *Straight Life* (1979), a scorching autobiography that drew attention to him as an unfairly neglected figure and to West Coast jazz of the 1950s as an unfairly maligned sub-genre. Small-group swing, which had been swept aside for most of the 1960s and early 1970s, made an encouraging comeback—or, to be more accurate, labels such as Pablo, Chiaroscuro, and Concord Jazz began recording it, filling a gap created by the major companies.

Amid fears that young musicians might bypass jazz for rock, there was an influx of fresh faces, including some, such as the trumpeter Warren Vaché and the tenor saxophonist Scott Hamilton, whose arrival made clear that not even styles of jazz perfected as long ago as the 1930s and early 1940s were in danger of extinction. The era’s most valuable newcomers, however, were second-wave avant-gardists, including the trombonist George Lewis, the flutist James Newton, the pianist Anthony Davis, and the tenor saxophonists David Murray and Chico Freeman, for whom free jazz of the 1960s was merely a starting point—a part of jazz history subject to revision and elaboration but no longer open to dispute.

The mid-1970s was the period during which “tradition” became a jazz buzzword, largely as a result of the avant-garde’s efforts to demonstrate its lineage from earlier forms of jazz. Sun Ra and his Arkestra began to feature numbers that Fletcher Henderson and others had written for Henderson’s band in the 1930s, and the alto saxophonist Henry Threadgill and his group Air reached all the way back to Scott Joplin and Jelly Roll Morton. At a time when it was practically a

given that creativity entailed playing only original compositions, the saxophonists Archie Shepp, Anthony Braxton, and Arthur Blythe confounded listeners’ expectations with relatively straightforward performances of bebop and popular standards. The message seemed to be that any tradition broad enough to encompass both ragtime and bebop was broad enough to encompass free jazz as well.

THE most surprising development was a shift in emphasis only somewhat presaged by these excursions into the jazz past. “Jazz is by its very nature a music of improvisation . . . Therefore of invention . . . Therefore of ongoing change,” a writer named Ross Firestone fingersnapped in the opening paragraph of his liner notes for *Wildflowers*, a series of five LPs recorded amid much fanfare in the spring of 1976 at Studio Rivbea (not a studio at all but a performance space run by the tenor saxophonist Sam Rivers and his wife, Bea, in their lower-Manhattan loft). The notes for *Jazz Loft Sessions*, a single CD gleaned from those five LPs, omit Firestone’s opening paragraph and begin instead with his reasonable observation that Studio Rivbea and other New York lofts afforded musicians of the late 1970s an opportunity to try new things in public, free from the pressures of nightclubs and concert halls. Their search was for expanded contexts in which to improvise—that is, new ways of approaching the question of composition in jazz.

For all its sound and fury, the avant-garde of the 1960s had left the structure of jazz fundamentally unchanged. In free jazz as in bebop, a “tune” was something played at the beginning and repeated at the end, generally little more than harmonic scaffolding for improvised solos (and frequently not even that in free jazz, where reference to the tune’s chord changes was optional). Beginning around 1976, in the work of the alto saxophonist Julius Hemphill and numerous others, including many of the players on *Jazz Loft Sessions*, composition and improvisation started to overlap—the way they had, perhaps not coincidentally, on Jelly Roll Morton’s recordings in the 1920s with his Red Hot Peppers and in Fletcher Henderson’s and Duke Ellington’s scores for their big bands.

For someone like Hemphill or Henry Threadgill, a “composition” could be a piece written out from beginning to

end, with multiple themes and a limited amount of improvisation, or it could be nothing more than a riff. When it was only a riff, the riff was likely to turn up anywhere—between solos and underneath them, but not necessarily at the beginning and end.

The turning point seemed to come with the release of Anthony Braxton's *Creative Orchestra Music 1976*. Unlike most of his peers in the jazz avant-garde, who recorded for a variety of domestic and European labels with limited studio budgets, Braxton was under contract to Arista, a mid-major (in the language of that day's record business) with the resources to indulge his grandest ambitions. Arista failed in its attempt to position Braxton as the most significant new voice in jazz since Ornette Coleman; not even the most intrepid record buyers knew what to make of a saxophonist who gave his compositions diagrammatic titles and whose newest release might well be an album of Stockhausenlike pieces for solo piano on which Braxton himself did not play a note.

Braxton's affiliation with Arista enabled him to write for and perform with large ensembles, and he caught his most ardent admirers by surprise with two numbers on *Creative Orchestra Music 1976*. Both were saddled with titles that looked like the doodles of a daydreaming physicist. One, described by Braxton in his notes as an exercise in "repetition structure" and as having been inspired by Duke Ellington, borrowed Ellington's harmonic tapestry to make a ballad inlaid with counter-melodies more dissonant than his, but not by much. Less than two years after Ellington's death, when tributes to him abounded, this one did more than echo his orchestra's sound; it demonstrated his continued relevance to composers working in idioms far removed from the dance band.

The album's other winner was a mid-western circus march—authentic three-ring music replete with tuba, glockenspiel, bass drum, and improvised solos that sounded as though they were being executed by acrobats atop the high wire. In the movie *My Left Foot*, Daniel Day-Lewis, as the Irish writer and painter Christy Brown, tells a questioner, "There are only two kinds of painting—religious and the circus." The same goes for art in general, including jazz. Having reached a dead end with religion in the early part of the decade, the jazz avant-garde of the late

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1970s gave itself and its listeners a break by unexpectedly opting for the circus.

CREATIVE Orchestra Music 1976 is out of print, but you can hear the avant-garde's spirit lifting—its music becoming more communicative, or at least more robust—on a variety of albums of the same vintage, including Hemphill's *Blue Boyé*, a solo-saxophone recording from 1977 that was originally released by Hemphill on his private label (part of another period trend, reflecting both a desire for self-determination on the part of musicians and a lack of interest on the part of established record companies). *Blue Boyé*, restored to circulation as a two-disc set on the private label of the alto saxophonist Tim Berne, a Hemphill protégé, is an exception among solo-saxophone recordings in being only occasionally solipsistic. Hemphill "cheats"—and more power to him—by overdubbing one or two additional horn parts on five of the set's eight performances, including the opening "Countryside," in which his slowly intersecting lines on flute and soprano and alto saxophones create a haunting pastorate. With the notable exception of "Kansas City Line"—nine thrilling minutes of bebop stripped to its essentials—the tracks on which Hemphill eschews overdubbing are interesting mainly as inventories of the advanced or "extended" saxophone and flute techniques favored in loft performances during this period, such as the use of growling or humming to give the illusion of producing two or more notes simultaneously on instruments theoretically incapable of doing so. These performances are never as dry as they might be, because Hemphill—a Texan, like Ornette Coleman—packs even the most abstract of them with blues fervor. The tracks I remember returning to most often in the late 1970s are those featuring Hemphill in duplicate or triplicate. These predicted the voicings he would use in his writing for World Saxophone Quartet—the rhythm-section-less cooperative ensemble he formed with Hamiet Bluiett, Oliver Lake, and David Murray the year before he recorded *Blue Boyé*.

Essentially a chamber group—but one delivering the knockout punch of a big band—WSQ brought to fruition many of the ideas formulated in lofts. It became the benchmark jazz ensemble of the 1980s, and then seemed to lose much of

its original character following Hemphill's departure, in 1990. WSQ's most imaginative and prolific composer, Hemphill was adamant about letting the four saxophones stand alone. For the remainder of his life (he died in 1995) Hemphill's primary vehicle was an all-saxophone sextet that frequently sounded more like WSQ than WSQ did in its subsequent encounters with rhythm sections and African drummers.

The four original members of World Saxophone Quartet are present on *Jazz Loft Sessions*, three of them leading their own bands; Lake performs as a sideman. Bluiett and Hemphill are represented by performances suggestive of their best work (Lake and Murray, alas, are not). Bluiett's "Tranquil Beauty" is a plangent and somewhat traditional blues and also a springboard for liberated simultaneous improvisation by Bluiett (on clarinet and baritone saxophone) and the cornetist Olu Dara, whose puckish wit was one of the era's wonders. Hemphill's "Pensive" is reflective in all but its tempo, never quite settling into a ballad. The four-man rhythm section, featuring the cellist Abdul Wadud, the guitarist Bern Nix, and two percussionists, functions as an orchestra behind Hemphill's agile, singerlike alto-saxophone lead. The rest of *Jazz Loft Sessions* may be uneven, but "Pensive" is a spur-of-the-moment minor masterpiece.

Lenox Avenue Breakdown—the alto saxophonist Arthur Blythe's 1979 Columbia debut, reissued in 1998 by Koch Jazz—has a cohesiveness that is missing from even the best of the live performances on *Jazz Loft Sessions*. This is perhaps because of its balance of instruments—crucial to the success of music so dependent on spontaneous interplay, but hardly possible to match when recording on the fly.

Blythe seems to have been determined to put his best foot forward on record, and on *Lenox Avenue Breakdown* he succeeded in channeling his natural exuberance as a soloist into the writing of themes and backgrounds for a small group. His septet's unusual instrumentation remains part of the album's charm. James Newton's flute is voiced in such a way that it often sounds like a shadow falsetto to Blythe's alto, and Bob Stewart's mobile tuba is sometimes a string bass and sometimes a one-man brass section. James "Blood" Ulmer's guitar rumbles menac-

ingly with its dual suggestions of heavy metal and backwoods blues, and the percussionist Guillermo Franco adds a touch of Carnival with his woodblocks and whistles. Cecil McBee and Jack DeJohnette are the sort of bassist and drummer who can light a fire under a soloist; here it is Blythe who lights a fire under them. Blythe likes to riff on simple chord patterns—a practice common in jazz since Coltrane, and one that can land a soloist in quicksand. Blythe's salvation is his patience, his mastery of tension and release: you can hear him thinking several choruses ahead on his lengthier solos. His themes are deceptively simple and full of piquant details. The most attractive cuts on *Lenox Avenue Breakdown* are "Odessa," a lilting melody with a slightly Moorish cast, and the title track, a fast quasi-bop line minus the customary bridge.

WHY does no one, including me, remember the period represented by these reissues as a golden age? In my case, the answer could be that I was thirty years old in 1976 and had already been listening to jazz for more than a decade. In his introduction to Gottlieb's *The Golden Age of Jazz* the jazz critic John S. Wilson observed, "For most of us, the Golden Age of Jazz turns out to be the time when we first discovered the music." This may be true, but by the time people my age began listening to jazz, a lengthy history, available through recordings, had become a considerable part of its lure.

A problem with recordings, as with other means of reproduction, is that they permit nostalgia without memory. Starting with those fans of the 1940s who believed that the only jazz worthy of the name was the freewheeling style played in New Orleans before 1927 or so, there have always been jazz-record collectors obsessed with memories they feel cheated out of by having been born too late. This tendency is most pronounced among listeners who fell in love with jazz in the same bleak period I did—a time darkened by Coltrane's death, Miles Davis's defection to fusion (followed by that of his star sidemen), and the inactivity, for a few years each, of Davis, Sonny Rollins, Charles Mingus, Ornette Coleman, and Thelonious Monk—not just marquee names but musicians to whom others looked for direction. We and the listeners who discovered jazz ten years later listened to the seventies avant-garde with



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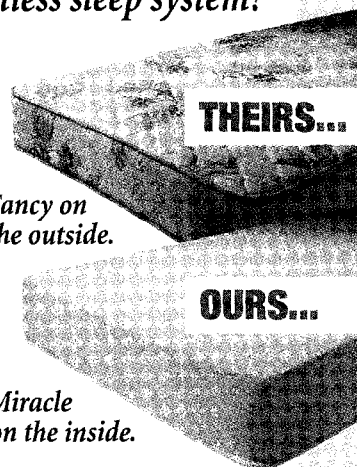
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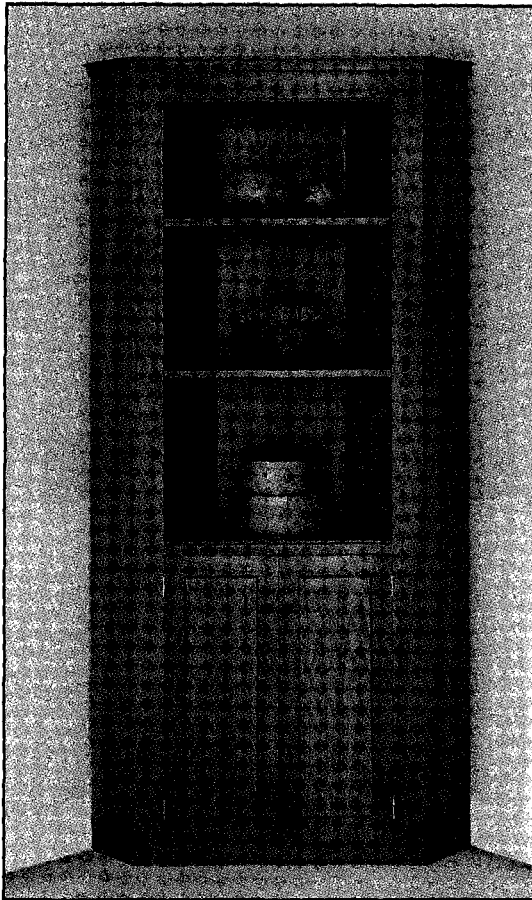


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our minds made up that things would never again be as good as they once were.

Another problem is that almost nobody remembers anything about the 1970s very fondly, partly because the 1960s were a tough act to follow. Yet the 1970s were a time of great artistic ferment, especially in the popular arts. The collapse of the Hollywood studio system enabled Martin Scorsese and Francis Ford Coppola to bring their movies to the screen with minimal commercial interference (though test screenings and the millions made by *Star Wars* and its sequels put an end to that). The original cast of *Saturday Night Live* broadened the horizons of television sketch comedy. In classical music the composers Steve Reich and Philip Glass made tonality and rhythm and a large vision of the world acceptable again, after several decades of composers who made minute adjustments to the twelve-tone scale. (That Reich and Glass were supposed to be “minimalists” was one of the decade’s delicious ironies.) In pop, disco sparked what may prove to have been the last national dance craze, and punk and New Wave set the tone for most of today’s alternative rock. Yet all that anyone seems to remember about the 1970s is the sexual promiscuity and the polyester (it was the decade that fashion forgot).

In the years since, jazz has experienced what we are told is a commercial renaissance, but that isn’t necessarily the same thing as an artistic rebirth. Most of the performers on *Jazz Loft Sessions* are still active, working along the same lines they were pursuing in the 1970s. Their influence is most apparent in the music of John Zorn, Dave Douglas, Bobby Previte, and others associated with New York’s downtown avant-garde scene.

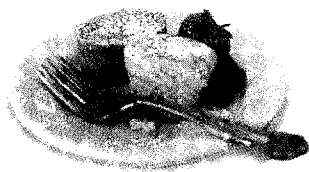
But the avant-garde has become marginalized again, and everyone on the business end of jazz seems happier with it safely out of sight. In keeping with what seems to be the spirit of the times, *Billboard* now features two jazz sales charts: “jazz/contemporary” for smooth jazz and fusion, and “jazz” for everything else—an arrangement that doesn’t leave much room for experimentation. To me, this doesn’t seem to be an especially exciting time for jazz, though there may be young people just now discovering it, and going to hear it in out-of-the-way places, who will one day look back on this as its golden age. I hope so. ☼

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Slice of Life

*A sweet corner of Italy just over the
Ponte del Cancellio Dorato*

FROM the street the maroon glass panels seem like an elegant apparition. "Pasticceria," one says, in gilded italic lettering framed by gold curlicue borders. "Gelateria," "Caffè," "Torrefazione," say three more, signifying that ice cream and coffee, as well as pastry, are served behind the spotless plate-glass windows, and that coffee beans are roasted on the premises.

Everything inside Emporio Rulli, too, seems like an apparition. To the right is a

dark-paneled shop displaying handmade chocolates on silver trays and canisters of coffee beans on a white-marble counter. Lighted wall shelves hold decorative porcelain and quilted brocade gift boxes,

by Corby Kummer

wedding-cake brides and grooms, and bulbous glass bowls filled with gilded, silvered, and pastel-colored almonds. Filling another wall is an impressive selection of Italian wines. In the adjoining room—the pastry shop proper—are glass cases filled with dozens of

miniature pastries and cookies, fruit tarts, and many kinds of freshly made gelato in deep rectangular pans. Through a wide portal is the café, with a dozen tables and a long banquette beneath a fanciful mural in the style of Tiepolo, showing bakers busily at work beside a Venetian lagoon. You can choose the sandwich or pastry that most appeals to you by pointing to it on one of the display trays, which uniformed servers constantly refill and dust to clear away crumbs and powdered sugar. Every accoutrement is typical of a first-class Italian pastry shop: the metal trays, the decorative boxes, the display cases, even the long-handled shallow spoons in the sugar bowl at the bar and the tiny napkins printed with the Emporio Rulli logo.

Only the ambition and variety would seem unusual were this shop in, say, Turin, home of Italy's most beautiful and lovingly tended cafés and pasticcerias. And the accoutrements were indeed bought in Italy. But this is Larkspur, California. The kindly beige-haired woman behind the counter asks a customer pushing a stroller not "*Cosa desidera?*" but "Hard to believe it's so warm near the holidays, isn't it, dear?"



MARIN County may be famously scenic, but it is not an obvious spot for what may well be the closest thing in America to a top-flight Italian pastry shop and café. "It's just like stepping into Italy," my San Franciscan friend Pam Hunter promised when she instructed me to cross the Golden Gate Bridge and follow the road past yellow clapboard houses to the carefully quaint main street of Larkspur. Each time I step through the doors of Emporio Rulli, I feel I've entered Oz.

To choose a Californian comparison, Rulli resembles Disneyland in its faultlessly friendly service, complete cleanliness, and regional range. A shop that makes its own *panettone*, for instance, as many pastry shops around Milan and Turin do, will not always offer it year-round, as Rulli does, and will seldom offer for breakfast, alongside toasted wedges of *panettone*, the Florentine specialty *budino di riso*—an oval tart filled with rice pudding. Not even a pastry shop in Montecatini, the Tuscan spa town midway between Florence and Pisa, would necessarily offer *budino di riso* beside stacks of the town's famous *cialde*—salad-plate-sized beige wafers between which are sandwiched chopped almonds and vanillin-flavored sugar. A Montecatini pastry shop would rarely take the trouble to make from scratch *panforte*, a sticky spiced confection made of honey, nuts, and candied fruit, even if it is the best-known sweet of nearby Siena, Florence's historical rival. Only very large, well-staffed pastry shops devote equal care to hand-dipped chocolates and ice cream; only dry-goods stores or specialty shops roast their own coffee. Emporio Rulli, in other words, is a kind of Disney Main Street, with the specialties of many Italian regions polished up and presented all together.

The difference is that Rulli has soul. It's much more than a shiny facsimile because, almost miraculously, the family structure and even the customers' attitudes that turn Italian cafés, restaurants, and food shops into impromptu parties are reproduced too. (Supermarkets have lately made an incursion into Italian life; the intimacy and familiarity of food shopping is threatened, and many people fear that eating habits will follow.) The surprise is that the eponymous owner is not a homesick transplanted Italian but a mall-going California kid whose first job, just up the

highway, was frying doughnuts to pay for his Camaro.

Gary Rulli spoke no Italian and had never visited his maternal family's homeland before he finished high school. (Rulli is his mother's family name, which Gary Doyle decided to use when he became interested in Italian pastry; the Doyle heritage is Alsatian, Irish, and Scottish). He had, however, progressed from the doughnut shop to a long-established bakery in North Beach, the Italian-American neighborhood of San Francisco. He knew he liked to bake. But when he visited Turin, where a grandfather's cousin lived, its pastry shops came as a revelation. So did the honor that Italy still accords artisans. "You weren't just a baker," Rulli, a friendly and energetic bearded man of thirty-eight, told me when I recently visited. "It's an art, a tradition. Anyone who was the proprietor of one of these shops was a very well respected person."

Rulli made a career choice alien to his high school classmates: he worked for room and board in a Milanese pastry shop, living with the owner's family and learning Italian on the job. He paid special attention to the "master" chefs he encountered, who were happy to pass along their life experiences. When he came home, after two years, he followed a very old script. Bearing in mind one of the expressions he had picked up, "*L'altra metà della pasticceria è la moglie*" ("The other half of the pastry shop is the wife"), he married a young Italian-American woman and invited her to help him open his dream store. Today Jeannie Rulli, a striking, dark-haired woman, puts her graphics training and experience to work designing display cases and chocolate boxes for the store, and also its catalogue (the Web site is www.rulli.com).

Rulli learned from his mother's parents the importance of family: his Italian-born grandparents ran an inn in the spa town of Calistoga, between the Napa and Sonoma Valleys, and as children Gary and his brother and sister visited them regularly. "The biggest thing we learned from our grandparents," Rulli says, "was 'You're coming up to see us every weekend.'" In Italy he saw that successful small businesses were usually family enterprises.

Jeannie Rulli comes into the store every day while the couple's two sons, Giancarlo, nine, and Alessandro, five, are at school. Rulli's sister, Lauren Gardner, manages the staff and graciously serves

customers from early morning until late afternoon. Her nephews generally stop by for breakfast and after-school ice cream accompanied by Jeannie's parents, Margaret and Charles Miglia, who live a few miles away and often babysit. Rulli's mother, Lucille Doyle, comes in every morning to do the books. His father, Robert Doyle, an electrician who wires convention booths at the Moscone Center, in downtown San Francisco, looks in on his way home to see if his son needs any repairs on the many pieces of equipment he bought in Italy. Jeannie's father, a retired mechanical engineer, also helps with maintenance, occasionally hand-milling replacement parts. And, of course, Robert visits with his grandchildren and picks up his wife; the DoYLES also live several miles away. Gary and Jeannie live twenty-five feet from the store.

IN the eleven years since it opened, Emporio Rulli has grown slowly and carefully, expanding into the two storefronts on either side of the original pastry shop. The decisions to roast coffee and make chocolates by hand were deliberate, reached only when the Rullis could afford the equipment and the help. Other changes just happened, as the store began attracting devotees. The Montecatini wafer-making press, whose six hydraulic pistons stamp the store's logo onto Rulli's *cialde*, came from a wine salesman who had dreamed of starting a chain of wafer shops but instead went to work in Italy and sold the machine to Rulli at cost. It is ably run by Esmerelda Lopez-Garcia, who began as a helper clearing dishes and chose to stay because the shop is so like the ones in her native Mexico. Augie Morello, who wears white-cotton gloves and calls people "dear" as she helps them select chocolates, is a Larkspur neighbor who loved the shop and the family so much that she asked if she could volunteer there mornings. Ann Golson, an early customer, was so taken with the shop that she persuaded the Rullis to start their catalogue; she now runs the shipping department.

Visitors from many Latin American and European countries say that the shop reminds them of home, and a number of local children and their parents consider the shop almost a second home. "Customers will move away—Marin is transient," Rulli says. "They move to Tahoe,

or to Belgium, and it's fantastic that when they come back, they still feel like it's their place."

Emporio Rulli's wafers and *panettone* and chocolates and coffee are available in the catalogue or from its Web site, and you can join a pastry-of-the-month club to receive elaborate tarts or order the plain little butter cookies and biscotti that Rulli has learned to make on his annual refresher tours of Italian pastry shops. For Easter, the store's second-biggest holiday, Rulli makes big hollow chocolate eggs to be filled on request with special keepsakes for family and friends, as is done in Italy. He also makes *colomba*, the slightly lighter Easter version of *panettone*, which is baked in a wide, dove-shaped paper form, with only a bit of candied orange and a crunchy topping of whole almonds and sugar that can by itself be reason enough to buy one. Rulli's *panettone* is pleasingly spongy, very buttery, and richly flavored; the shop sells 9,000 pounds of it in December alone and 5,000 more during the rest of the year. For all of it Rulli uses a piece of "natural yeast" starter that he brought back from Italy twelve years ago—a gift from his Milanese mentor.

Nothing could make Easter morning more festive than a Rulli chocolate egg and a wide almond-covered dove (warmed in a low oven for ten or fifteen minutes) served with coffee, the tray placed either temptingly near or deliberately far from anyone who knows how good the topping is. But not even that matches the experience of stepping from northern California into northern Italy and ordering a cappuccino and a croissant—the kind Italians call *cornetti* or just "brioche," which are yeastier and much less rich than their French counterparts, infinitely preferable, and virtually unknown in this country.

I wish there were a Rulli near my office. So do many San Franciscans. Two coffee bars operated by Rulli are scheduled to open at the San Francisco Airport in July. But he regards the idea of opening another full-service pastry, chocolate, and ice cream shop the way he regards students fresh out of cooking school who expect high salaries right away. "You have to learn over and over again, repeat every step," he says. "Time and experience you can't learn in a book."

And a book, I would add, can't build a family. ☼

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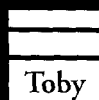
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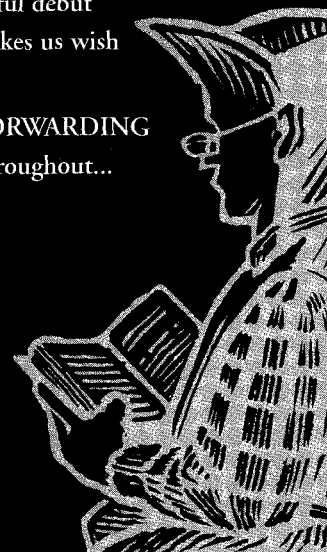
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Beauty Under the Knife

In some circles in New York and Los Angeles, our reviewer writes, "no one knows anymore what a fifty-five-year-old woman really looks like"

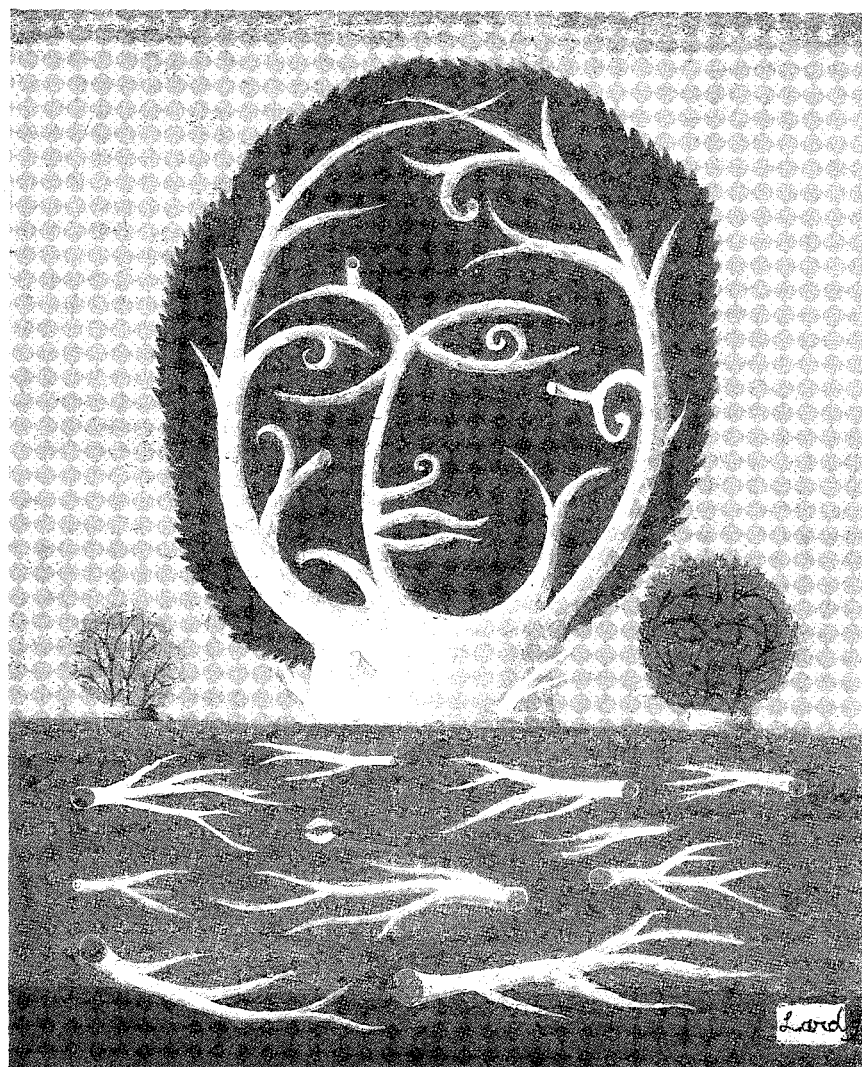
by Holly Brubach

MAKING THE BODY BEAUTIFUL

A Cultural History of Aesthetic Surgery

by Sander L. Gilman.
Princeton University Press,
396 pages, \$29.95.

WORKING in the fashion business for the past twenty-some years, I have frequently had cause to contemplate beauty in its most conspicuous forms and also the apparent lack of it. We are raised on stories in which some ravishing heroine, the soul of goodness, is menaced by a wicked witch recognizable by her ugliness, and there is a kind of justice in this that we are loath to relinquish. I myself subscribe to the notion that by the time you're fifty, you have the face you deserve, which might seem no more than a cynical, grown-up attempt to keep alive that fairy-tale law of nature except that there is indeed some truth to it: after five decades of repetitive scowling or laughter or worry, one's attitude toward life is etched on one's face. And here is where the issue gets complicated—because in the end it is not the geometry of one's nose or the shape of one's eyes or mouth that makes a face attractive. Rather, it is that "raw material" as manipulated by our expressions over time. The older we get, the more expression takes over, until the faces of the elderly are so full of personality—so dominated by it—that the actual contour of their features seems immaterial. If some of us find the prospect of plastic surgery unsettling, that is, I think, largely owing to some deep-seated suspicion, borne out by observation, that appearances aren't purely arbitrary—that they contain impor-



tant information, and by altering those appearances we falsify that information.

And yet who hasn't felt misrepresented by the face in the mirror, or registered the discrepancy between the people we know ourselves to be and the way others perceive us? We identify with Cyrano's suffering—that of an exquisite soul eclipsed by a single unfortunate feature. Today, of course, a plastic surgeon could intervene,

rendering Cyrano every bit as handsome as Christian, his rival for Roxanne's affection, and the story would have a happy ending. Or would Cyrano, an outcast and a laughingstock all his life, so readily accept the privileges that good looks confer? His is the soul of a poet, and his experience, however excruciating, has taught him tenderness, irony, reflection, and compassion. Similarly, in *Little*

Women, Amy learns to live with her anomalous nose, and is the better for it.

A friend recently remarked that in some circles in New York (and I would imagine it's true in Hollywood as well) no one knows anymore what a fifty-five-year-old woman really looks like. The face that has been lifted has become the norm. Certain women I know, now in their forties, have already undergone what one surgeon refers to as "preventive" face-lifts. At the risk of sounding a puritanical note, I confess that there is still for me a certain Dorian Gray-like creepiness about this business of attempting to reset the hands of time, a sense that one doesn't get away without paying a penalty of some kind—in some cases an enormous price, when something goes awry. Take, for instance, the fate of Consuelo, the Duchess of Marlborough, a legendary beauty who underwent a series of paraffin injections to fend off the effects of aging and, disfigured by the results, became a recluse for the rest of her life. And yet, despite this and any number of other, more recent cautionary tales, denial springs eternal.

AMONG the before-and-after pictures, the diagrams depicting physiognomic ideals, the occasionally ghoulish close-ups of faces disfigured by war or disease, that illustrate Sander Gilman's *Making the Body Beautiful: A Cultural History of Aesthetic Surgery* are two photographs reproduced from an early textbook on rhinoplasty and identified as "images of happy patients." In one a woman is smiling broadly, her face tilted to the sun, her arms spread as if she were about to fly; in the other a man and a woman dance in the street. They are still sporting bandages, so it is too soon to tell what changes their surgery will bring about in their lives—how different a stranger's response to them will be, or which of the doors previously closed to them will now swing open. Rather, the patients' glee is in proportion to their conviction that they have been transformed, that what was wrong with their lives has at last been righted.

Gilman calls happiness "the central goal of aesthetic surgery" ("aesthetic" with an *ae* because, he explains, that's the way it is most often spelled by the surgeons themselves, who confer on their work "a classical lineage" by harking back to ancient Greece). Face-lifts, nose

jobs, liposuction, decircumcision, buttocks implants, breast augmentation, and breast reduction, among other procedures, present themselves, Gilman drily notes, as surgical cures for what is often essentially a psychological problem—a persistent sense of discontent. That more and more Americans are resorting to these remedies is borne out by statistics: in 1981 there were 296,000 such operations in the United States; in 1995 there were 825,000 on the face alone. Strikingly, the numbers indicate that altering one's appearance is no longer the exclusive prerogative of Michael Jackson, movie stars, and New York socialites: in 1994, Gilman tells us, 65 percent of plastic-surgery patients had household incomes of less than \$50,000.

The discretion and shame once associated with "cosmetic" (or "plastic," as it is more colloquially, if less elegantly, known) surgery seem quaint hallmarks of a bygone era—albeit the day before yesterday—when people still had secrets, when women might sneak off for an extended "vacation" and come back looking "rested." Celebrities now publicly acknowledge the work they have had done: Gilman cites Roseanne's example—an overhaul that included new eyelids, cheek implants, liposuction, a face-lift, a nose job, a chin implant, and breast reduction. An article in the August issue of *Vogue*, written by a woman who treated her fifty-five-year-old mother to a face-lift, describes it as a bonding experience. Evidence of just how commonplace these procedures have become now crops up everywhere, not only in mainstream magazines but in the far corners of the culture. The French artist Orlan, born in 1947, has made a career out of a series of operations that have turned her into a human compendium of art-historical "quotations," incorporating the chin of Botticelli's Venus, the lips of Moreau's Europa, the eyes of Gérôme's Psyche, the brow of Leonardo's Mona Lisa.

With its bizarre amalgam of new developments in medicine and prevailing trends in fashion, "aesthetic surgery" is a phenomenon that begs for examination, and Gilman, as both historian and critic, proves equal to the task. The medical history will come as a surprise to anyone who assumes, as I did, that cosmetic procedures were a luxury that surgeons got around to developing only after they had perfected life-saving techniques such

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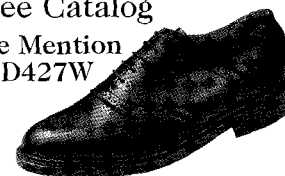
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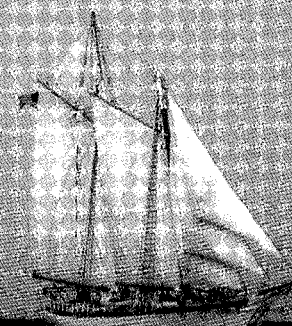
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as appendectomies and tracheotomies. Gilman traces the field's origins to a sixteenth-century epidemic of syphilis, which corrodes the noses of its victims and, in its hereditary form, the noses of their children. The most popular (and, presumably, effective) solution entailed grafting a flap of skin taken from the forehead, the cheek, or the upper arm; the scarring, however, was a giveaway. Finally, in the 1880s, a surgeon by the name of John Orlando Roe, in Rochester, New York, devised an operation that, by entering through the nostrils, would leave no trace, and modern rhinoplasty was born. That so much of the history Gilman recounts pre-dates anesthesia and antisepsis is testimony to the astounding determination of early patients to undergo surgery. That determination was—and still is—fueled by a certain fetishism, the tendency to fixate on a single aberrant feature and to blame it for one's social, professional, or personal misfortunes. Gilman demonstrates that this may be simply a more obsessive form of the fetishism with which we routinely size one another up (the better part of his first 200 pages is devoted almost exclusively to the nose, that badge of ethnic identity).

Reconstructive techniques developed in the aftermath of war—the First World War in particular—eventually proved useful for other, cosmetic purposes. With the onset of the twentieth century, aesthetic surgery began to address the effects of aging. The first face-lift, Gilman tells us, was performed on a Polish aristocrat in 1901. New procedures have been introduced as a perceived need for them has arisen. Whereas corpulence was admired in previous eras for its connotations of prosperity, thinness is idolized in ours. Hence liposuction, first performed in 1977.

However, what is beautiful or erotic can be defined only within the context of a given culture at a given moment; the definition varies not only from one era to the next but also from one society to the next. Gilman marshals any number of examples to demonstrate how remarkably capricious the trends in physical features can be—among them, what he calls the “dialectic of the breast.” During the twenties the flat-chested flapper epitomized the modern woman, free to lead a life of her own choosing, unencumbered by the duties of reproduction. As that ideal gradually became *démodé*, breast re-

duction gave way to augmentation, until, Gilman says, “beginning in the United States in the 1950s, there was a concerted effort to search for cures for this new disease of ‘too-small breasts.’” Ample breasts went out of style again in the anorexic sixties, presided over by Twiggy and Penelope Tree, and made a comeback in the eighties, which were dominated by a new generation of shapely models, many of them with silicone implants. Cross-cultural differences prove to be equally dramatic. Gilman quotes one plastic surgeon in Brazil, where small breasts are the ideal, who speculates that many of the same women now undergoing breast reduction there would most likely want breast augmentation in America. Nor are these whims limited to women's bodies. In a chapter on procedures for men Gilman weighs the appeal of decircumcision: in gay circles in Germany, he tells us, it is in to be “cut,” whereas in gay circles in New York it is in to be uncut.

INCORPORATED in this guided tour of aesthetic surgery's history are the ethical questions that arise along the way. From the outset this upstart branch of medicine provoked vehement opposition. Gilman quotes John Dryden's dictum: “God did not make his Works for man to mend.” And, indeed, in an era when thieves, army deserters, and adulterers had their noses cut off as punishment, the physician who undertook the reconstruction of their noses found few supporters. It was, it seems, only in the wake of the Napoleonic Wars that plastic surgery acquired widespread legitimacy, as it came to the rescue of heroes mangled on the battlefield. But the potential to transform never ceased to be controversial, and at the end of the Second World War plastic surgery became associated with ex-Nazis attempting to change their identities.

Gilman is at his best chronicling the myriad ways in which plastic surgery has put itself in the service of minorities (among the pioneering surgeons in Germany, several were Jews), speeding their acculturation and helping them to approximate the ideals established by whatever tribe is in power at the time. In Saigon (only one of his many examples) plastic surgery thrived during wartime, as Vietnamese women transformed their bodies and faces to look more “Western,” presumably in the hope of attracting the occupying soldiers. By 1975, when the

withdrawal of American troops was complete, the industry had collapsed.

Roe's rhinoplasty, Gilman tells us, was conceived as a remedy for the pug nose, which branded so many recent immigrants as Irish. The Irish physiognomy was regarded as “servile,” inspiring analogies to dogs (hence the name “pug”). Measured against the standard of the English nose in Britain or the German nose in America, the Irish nose was too short. The Irish nose and the Jewish nose and the African nose were all alike, Gilman writes, in that they represented difference. (The irony, of course, is that by the middle of the twentieth century the pug nose had become the ideal, as we are reminded by the face of every woman who underwent rhinoplasty in the 1960s.)

Jacques Joseph, a surgeon trained in Leipzig and Berlin at the end of the nineteenth century, and the author of the textbook on rhinoplasty mentioned above, was dismissed in 1896 by his (Jewish) supervisor for performing an operation that was purely cosmetic; vanity, he was told, was not sufficient grounds for surgery. In Joseph's eyes, however, such surgery was an act of mercy. For patients of limited means who “suffered from a ‘Jewish nose’” he is said to have provided his services *pro bono*. These services, he claimed, were sought not only by Jews but also by gentiles with noses that looked Jewish. In many if not most instances the desire for assimilation seems to have been largely pragmatic; if society's discrimination on the basis of appearance was deemed unfair, then any endeavor to circumvent that discrimination was justifiable. A hundred years later the motives, it seems, remain unchanged. Gilman summarizes a 1960 Johns Hopkins survey of Jewish teenage girls who wanted rhinoplasty. The study found that the girls' desire to change their noses was no indication of an intention to marry or to have friends outside their religion, or even to deviate from their families' religious practices. Not to be seen as Jewish, even while retaining a Jewish identity—this was the goal. To the extent that a new nose constituted a “betrayal” of origins, it was entirely superficial—which is presumably a minor offense, if it is an offense at all.

Among the many misguided attempts to arrive at some universal organizing principle on the basis of anatomy was Hermann Heinrich Ploss's ethnographic study of fe-

male anatomy, first published in 1885 in two illustrated volumes. Owing to increasing and continuing demand, it was extended and expanded even after his death, and its popularity culminated in a four-volume eleventh edition in 1927. The shape of the breast, according to Ploss, was a reliable index for ethnic classification. His contemporary Ernst Brücke equated smaller breasts with "Germanness." Gilman summarizes Ploss's "findings": "the farther south one goes from Germany, the more pendulous the breasts and the larger the areolas seem to get." Alas, Ploss's distinctions so succeeded in infiltrating a certain widespread bourgeois sensibility that, I can report from experience, they persisted—far from the source and unattributed—in certain sectors of middle America throughout the fifties and early sixties (and for all I know they survive to this day). Growing up at that time in Pittsburgh, I often heard large breasts, full lips, brown eyes, and "olive" complexions condemned as "ethnic"—a synonym for "other." The closer one got to the Mediterranean (a danger zone characterized by rampant sensuality and wanton behavior), the more exaggerated these traits became; the people to whom they belonged were also likely to be Roman Catholic.

Supermodels with silicone breasts and lips plumped up with collagen may not signify the repeal of those narrow criteria, but they surely represent the overthrow of the old hierarchy, in which everybody aspired to WASPdom. With the rise of multiculturalism, ethnic groups began to assert their differences. Barbra Streisand made history by not fixing her nose. What had been a stigma could under some circumstances prove to be an asset—as in the case of a professor of comparative literature at Stanford who, Gilman tells us, was offered a nose job by his uncle and declined it because in his field Jews are presumed to be bright.

For those whose scruples stand in the way of surgical repairs, Gilman does not mention that the high moral ground has grown quite slippery lately, owing to a battery of new procedures that blur the distinction between dermatology and plastic surgery. Twenty years ago the choice between a face-lift and a facial was clear-cut; today, however, doctors have built a bridge between surgery and grooming, complicating the issue. If, for instance, a woman has the brown spots on her hands removed, or "frozen," what's the moral

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N	D	I	S	H	E	S	S	H	A	L
L	O	W	S	U	C	C	E	L	L	O
B	I	G	H	T	K	V	E	T	C	H
E	S	B	E	I	J	I	N	G	C	R
E	E	K	C	R	E	M	A	T	E	R
E	D	R	A	F	T	S	I	P	H	O
N	E	D	O	V	E	R	S	T	R	A
I	N	I	N	G	P	O	S	I	T	I
O	N	S	T	E	R	R	A	P	I	N
S	U	R	G	E	S	T	U	P	I	D

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difference between that and a chemical peel to strip away layers of dead skin on her face? (Both are office procedures.) If she has a chemical peel, why not Botox injections to paralyze the muscles that knit her brow? If Botox, why not a face-lift? "I draw the line at general anesthesia," a friend says.

THE seven years I have lived abroad (in France and now in Italy) have irrevocably changed my perspective on all these matters. Although plastic surgery is by no means a solely American phenomenon, it seems to be rarer in Paris or Milan than it is in New York—apparently, one is forced to conclude, because fewer people perceive the need for it. In France, for example, women seem to grow old with dignity, with their sexuality intact, whereas in the United States I'm continually struck by how many women over forty are trying to look thirty. This is generally attributed to our native insecurity, if only because it's easier to blame us than it is to blame the culture that has made us feel as we do—an assignment of responsibility that would call into question some of our most cherished ideals. We have romanticized adolescence as a time of unlimited possibility—an optimal condition in a country that regards life as a lottery—to such an extent that we are tyrannized by youth. Plastic surgery appeals directly to our epidemic perfectionism and comes packaged in the trappings of self-improvement, our national pastime. Why let a large nose or a spare tire or a double chin get in the way of our pursuit of happiness?

If *Making the Body Beautiful* has a flaw, it is Gilman's evident reluctance to wrestle with the sexual politics that underlies plastic surgery's history and changing demographics. For a brief moment back in the seventies it looked as if feminism might put an end to the shame of aging and a woman's need to do something drastic about it. Women would be appreciated not—or not only—for how they look but for who they are. Men, having discovered the joys of equal partnership, would no longer regard beautiful, younger women as prizes. Men and women would grow old together.

So much for that plan. Instead we have *Welcome to Your Facelift*, a recent unabashed guidebook that would have been inconceivable twenty years ago. In those days the author, Helen Bransford, would have been run out of town for her cheer-

ful admission that, as a woman in her mid-forties, she underwent surgery in the hope of holding her younger husband's attention. To the extent that equal rights have come to pass where plastic surgery is concerned, they seem to mean that men are now compelled to get face-lifts too. Rather than women's feeling better about their bodies, men feel worse about theirs (though the number of men getting pectoral implants is still nowhere near the number of women getting breast implants). Girls have deplored their failure to measure up to Barbie for years; now, according to a joint study by researchers at Harvard University, the University of Massachusetts at Boston, and McLean Hospital, in Belmont, Massachusetts, boys may grow up to reproach themselves for falling short of the standard set by G.I. Joe, whose muscles have grown progressively larger over the past thirty years. His latest incarnation features biceps with a circumference that is the adult equivalent of twenty-six inches—larger than any bodybuilder's.

The images that bombard us daily, in magazines, advertising, television, and movies, are insidious, encroaching on the way we see ourselves; the premium we place on visual information, which bypasses words and telegraphs an instant message ideally suited to the velocity of our lives, is at an all-time high. Meanwhile, the Internet has spawned a new phenomenon—the notion of the disembodied self as the true self, a lone wanderer in cyberspace. Those who meet in chat rooms, unencumbered by the superficial signals sent by clothes, hairstyles, and physiques, connect on a level presumed to be direct and pure, transcending physical limitations. Online we cultivate new versions of ourselves, suspended in the ether. Is it any wonder, then, that so many people today fail to identify with their bodies? Obese or short or gray-haired or bald, we insist that we are not who we appear to be. Our faces grow older, our waistlines expand, our thighs spread, and instead of inhabiting them, we renounce them. Our bodies have betrayed us, we think, not recognizing that it is we who have betrayed them, by moving out. Gradually our so-called inner reality grows so estranged from our outward appearance that only a surgeon—an "aesthetic" surgeon, no less—can reconcile the two, carving our flesh to make it conform to the images in our minds. ☼

A Just Cause

by Jack Beatty

THE DEBT

What America Owes to Blacks

by Randall Robinson.

Dutton, 272 pages, \$23.95.

Is history becoming unsafe for injustice? About sixty German companies, including Deutsche Bank, Siemens, DaimlerChrysler, and Volkswagen, along with the German government, have offered to pay \$5.1 billion in reparations to the "slave laborers" who were forced to work in their offices and factories during the Third Reich. Swiss banks are unbuttoning their discretion to pay Holocaust survivors—or, in the case of deceased victims of the Holocaust, their families (a significant inclusion)—for money and treasure stolen from them by the Nazis. These precedents of historical responsibility have raised anew the question of reparations to African-Americans for the still-echoing horrors of 246 years of slavery. Randall Robinson's eloquent book—*The Fire Next Time*, perhaps, for this generation—could help to turn a mood into a movement.

Randall Robinson is one of the heroes of the patient struggle against apartheid in South Africa. He began his campaign in 1972, when, with a group of thirty black Harvard students, mostly from the law school, he occupied the office of Derek Bok, then the president of Harvard, to pressure the university to sell its holdings in companies with operations in the white-ruled colonialist states of Angola, Mozambique, and South Africa. The occupation lasted a week (a record for Harvard occupations), and by the long measure of anti-apartheid activism it worked. After nearly thirteen years of protests and embarrassments, the Harvard Corporation began "selected divestments" in 1985. (For information on the divestment movement see Robert Kinloch Massie's stirring 1997 history of U.S.-South African relations during the apartheid years, *Loosing the Bonds*.) In late 1984, when President Ronald Reagan's re-election—to which whites in South Africa responded by dancing in the streets—made the cause seem hopeless, Robinson reanimated the

movement by occupying the South African embassy in Washington, D.C. Hundreds followed him: being arrested in front of the embassy became a rite of passage for idealistic young people born too late for the civil-rights movement. TransAfrica, the pressure group Robinson revived in 1984, was well on its way.

Today Robinson wants to employ the tactics that ended apartheid to advance the justest cause in history. He envisions a "Year of Black Presence":

Every black church, organization, and institution would commit to choose one day of the 130-odd days that the Congress is in session and bring on that day one thousand African Americans to walk the halls of Congress in support of compensation measures designed to close the economic and psychic gap between blacks and whites in America. The Congress, for one year, would never stop seeing our faces, never stop hearing our demands, never be relieved of our presence.

The Debt is a work of ideas, not of policy prescriptions; nevertheless, Robinson has wisely included some proposals to bring home to his readers what's at stake. His main proposal, taken from the article "Many Billions Gone," by the Tulane Law School associate professor Robert Westley, is that a private national trust be established, with heavy contributions from the government, to pay for enriching the education of black children and for the college tuition of "all blacks who qualified academically and were found to be in financial need." Research into the uncompensated contributions that blacks have made to white businesses and individuals down the years would set the size and duration of the trust. Corporations, governments, and other institutions found to have benefited from slavery would be assessed "just compensation as an entitlement" for the labor they stole; these funds, too, would flow into the trust.

This compensation would be sought with the "same vigor that Undersecretary of State Stuart Eizenstat demonstrated on behalf of Jewish survivors of the Nazi holocaust," if Robinson had his druthers, and the trust would establish a museum of slavery on the Mall, in Washington, to document the magnitude of American iniquity. Robinson wants young African-Americans to see why they are disadvantaged relative to white Americans. "You are owed. . .," he writes. "The fault is

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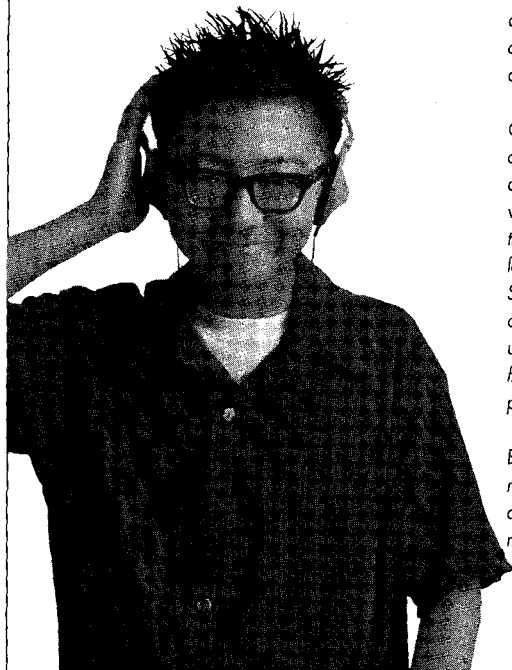
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10. Story of Reggae and Calypso
11. Introduction to English Folk Music
12. Instruments around the World

not yours. There is nothing wrong with you. They did this to you."

The Debt mixes autobiography with reflection, and sometimes, as in an account of a visit in Havana with Fidel Castro, the reader loses the main thread. However, even in the Cuban interlude Robinson says things that draw one to the main topic. For example, struck by the relative lack of race prejudice in Cuba, he writes, "Many blacks—most, perhaps, though I can't be sure—don't like America." How could it be otherwise? To ask African-Americans to like America in spite of America is to ask too much.

Every white woman who goes to a gynecologist should know that one of the pioneers of that specialty tested his implements and procedures on slave women, without consent or anesthesia. White people who visit the Capitol should know this:

The worn and pitted stones . . . had doubtless been hauled into position by slaves, for whom the most arduous of tasks were reserved. They had fired and stacked the bricks. They had mixed the mortar. They had sawn the long timbers in hellishly dangerous pits with one slave out of the pit and another in, often nearly buried alive in sawdust.

Every white railway passenger in the southeastern states should know that slave laborers built many of the first southern railroads from Georgia to Virginia, as the historian Scott Reynolds Nelson writes in his new book, *Iron Confederacies: Southern Railways, Klan Violence, and Reconstruction*. Slaves cleared the right-of-way and laid the tracks. Black convicts, in jail for breaking their sharecropping contracts with white landlords or for stealing shovels, finished the job after the Civil War—free at last!

American history would be covered with shame if stealing the lives and labor of a whole people were its worst crime. But, as Robinson explains poignantly, the worst was the obliteration of African-American memory, the breaking of links to the African cultures from which the slaves were torn. The peoples against whom the genocides of the twentieth century were perpetrated—Armenians, Jews, Cambodians—"weathered the savageries with their cultural memories intact." They could "regenerate themselves and their societies" by building on their traditions. "Only slavery, with its sadistic patience, asphyxiated memory, and smothered cultures, has hulled empty a whole race of

people with inter-generational efficiency." That is why slavery is "far and away the most heinous human rights crime visited upon any group of people in the world over the last five hundred years."

With charged views for and against, the reparations debate would inevitably be racially divisive. What good can outweigh that harm? Robinson says that absent reparations, "there is *no* chance that America can solve its racial problems—if solving these problems means, as I believe it must, closing the yawning economic gap between blacks and whites." Equality is Robinson's transcendent good: simple justice. The question is whether these means will lead to that end or away from it.

African-Americans can begin to make themselves whole through the reparations

debate, Robinson says—they need a past before they can claim the future. The call for justice could evoke "a surge of black self-discovery."

We could wear the call as a breastplate, a coat of arms. We could disinter a buried history, connect it to another, more recent and mistold, and give it as a healing to the whole of our people, to the whole of America.

Would the call for reparations become a race-wide embrace of "victimhood"—the term that glib commentators use to advertise their feeble moral imaginations? Robinson will have none of that. To stand up for justice is to transcend the passive suffering of victims. It is to say, with pride, "Enough." It is to demand that Americans answer for their history. ♣

BRIEF REVIEWS



My Century

by Günter Grass,
translated by Michael Henry Heim.
Harcourt Brace, 320 pages, \$25.00.

Mr. Grass was born in 1927. The century of the title is that of Germany, with a piece of the book for every year of it. The author begins with a brisk little story of the Boxer Rebellion, in which a young soldier salvages a pigtail from an execution site. His fiancée throws it in the fire, lest it haunt the house. This tale may, or may not, be considered a deliberate omen of the grim or ironic or discouraged reminiscences that Mr. Grass's fictional narrators subsequently provide. These narrators give a vivid, if partial, view of German society. Very few of them are persons of distinction, although the Kaiser does make an appearance. The years 1914 to 1918 are covered by conversations between the writers Erich Maria Remarque (anti-war) and Ernst Jünger (all for it), arranged by a Swiss researcher who privately describes her "witnesses of an era" as "an impressive, if slightly fossilized, pair." The item for 1919, set (unlike most) in its own time,

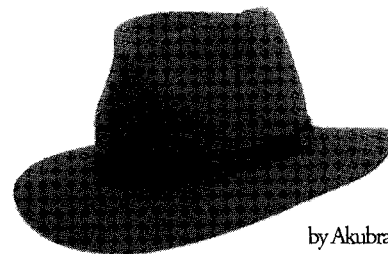
is a housewife's diatribe against turnips. The Second World War is represented by a gathering of veteran war correspondents who complain about what their editors refused to print and explain military errors. It is one of several pieces with a clear satirical edge. Most of these not-quite-stories depend on oblique implications of folly and helplessness to create the impression of a country drifting without a course. The format enables Mr. Grass to write his version of history while pretending not to, and also to include the kind of odd detail that formal historians rarely mention.

Balthus

by Nicholas Fox Weber.
Knopf, 644 pages, \$40.00.

Admirers of the painter Balthus (Count Balthazar Klossowski de Rola) revere him as a great artist. Detractors accuse him of pedophilia, pornography, and mysterious devilry. Mr. Weber belongs to the first category, and was euphoric when the reclusive painter agreed to extensive interviews despite his long-ago statement "I refuse to confide and don't like it when

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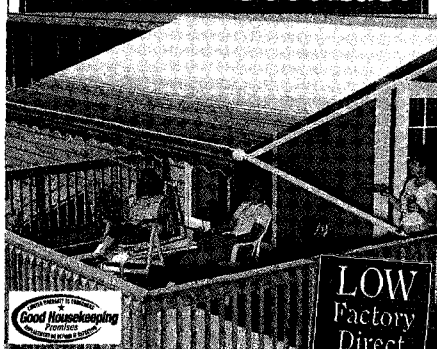
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people write about art." Mr. Weber's profession is writing about art, with an inclination toward psychological and symbolic interpretation. The result of this conflict of positions is a peculiar and interesting book. Balthus was gracious, charming, and hospitable, very much the European aristocrat that he claims to be, and impervious to psychological probing. Mr. Weber eventually became so exasperated that he labels the painter a liar. He also resorts to quoting from everything ever written about Balthus, and to interviews with everyone still alive who ever knew him. He appears quite unaware that he is giving an amusing account of an earnest snooper in heavy-footed pursuit of an agile dodger. Balthus insists that he paints ordinary reality. Mr. Weber insists that he does not, and Mr. Weber is right in terms of what is ordinary. If, however, Balthus considers the imagination of the viewer to be part of reality, his more provocative paintings can be seen as operating like the ideal dirty limerick—the kind that evokes naughty meaning in the hearer's head without the use of a single naughty word. Unfortunately, the illustrations in this truly exceptional book are so inadequate that the details discussed by the author are often invisible and the brushwork always is.

Ghosts of Cape Sabine

by Leonard F. Guttridge.

Putnam's, 368 pages, \$26.95.

The Greely Expedition, remembered today (if at all) as a bungling disaster, was initially the project of William Henry Howgate, a scalawag officer in the newly formed Army Signal Corps who had won "the wholehearted trust" of its ailing commander. Howgate wanted the United States to participate in an international scheme to set up scientific stations around the Arctic. It was still believed in some quarters that ice-free water surrounded the North Pole. There was the usual pulling and hauling in Washington—Army, Navy, Congress, press—but despite a profound lack of enthusiasm from Robert Todd Lincoln, the Secretary of War, Howgate's project materialized, with his friend Lieutenant Adolphus Greely, of the Signal Corps, in command. The expedition was dropped off at Lady Franklin Bay, on Ellesmere Island, in August of 1881, equipped with materials for good housing and lavish provisions. An

annual supply ship was promised. No ship ever came. Supplies dwindled, animosities increased, and Greely was not the man to hold the party well together through a terrible retreat. There were few survivors and much scandal, including talk of cannibalism. Mr. Guttridge's pursuit of records, letters, and diaries has enabled him to reconstruct the whole story, and it is as fascinating and exciting as any adventure novel, even though the reader knows the outcome from page one.

Moira's Crossing

by Christina Shea.

St. Martin's, 288 pages, \$22.95.

Moira and her sister, Julia, both in their teens, are shipped from poverty and tragedy on an Irish sheep farm to America, where their father hopes they will find a better future than he can provide. The O'Leary girls are not alike. Moira is handsome and energetic, and has abandoned the church. Julia is mildly deformed, fragile, and severely pious. Between them lies the rarely mentioned truth about their younger sister's death. They stick together despite their differences, and their zigzag progress in the new country makes a quietly appealing novel. Ms. Shea's style combines a briskly practical surface with a lyrical undertone. It holds the reader's interest.

Girl With a Pearl Earring

by Tracy Chevalier.

Dutton, 234 pages, \$21.95.

The narrator of Ms. Chevalier's novel is Griet, a Protestant girl in Delft, who at sixteen, because her family has fallen on hard times, becomes a maid in the household of the painter Vermeer. The Vermeers are Catholics—a species that Griet has never met before. She is not accustomed to gentility, either, and the Vermeers count as such even though their bills go unpaid. Ms. Chevalier has done very well in creating the feel of a society with sharp divisions of status and creed. She pictures the furniture, the household equipment, the streets and markets. Griet is a memorable character—reserved, wary, observant, and, although she does not know it, afflicted with a serious and ultimately dangerous crush on her employer. The situation makes a fine story, which is exceptionally well told.

—Phoebe-Lou Adams



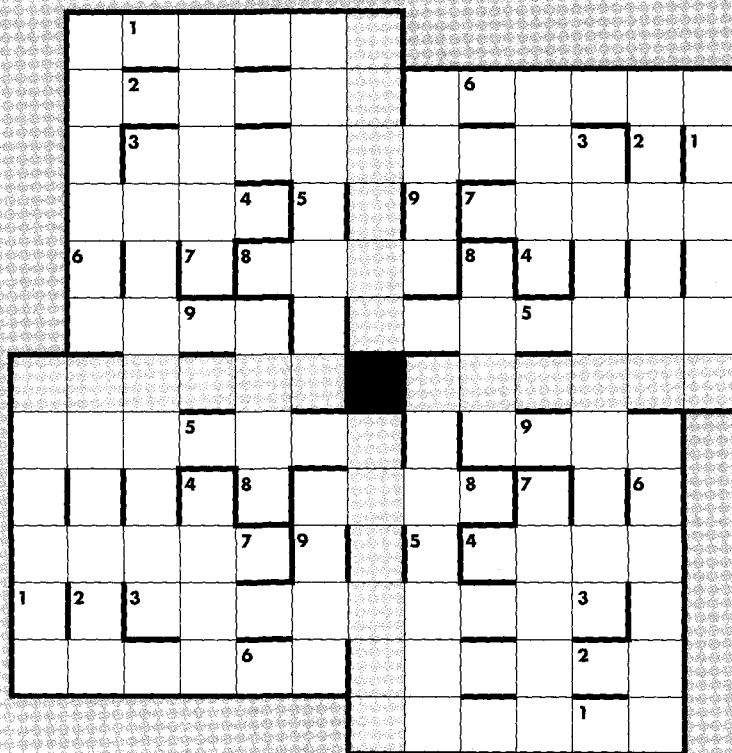
THE PUZZLER

by Emily Cox and Henry Rathvon

Your Turn

In this spinning puzzle we've taken our turn by grouping symmetrically situated entries, one from each quadrant of the grid, and shuffling them into random order before cluing them. The four entries in each clue group are identified in the grid by their shared number, which may occur anywhere in a word's sequence (not necessarily at the beginning). The shaded, unclued set of entries will offer an appropriate activity, along with a piece of advice. Four answers are capitalized. Now it's your turn to play.

The solution to last month's Puzzler appears on page 101.



Clues

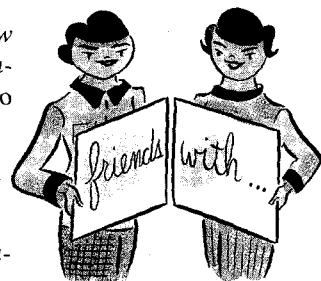
- 1.a. Try incomplete turn for a sure thing (6)
- b. Writer Hubbard's high after a turn (6)
- c. Happened to put iron in one end of a sousaphone (6)
- d. Track activity of a cult's leader in criminal group (6)
- 2.a. Arizona grassland containing a flowering shrub (6)
- b. Pleistocene elephant's head in front of iguanodon rib set (3,3)
- c. Timber above Thor Heyerdahl, for one (6)
- d. Enchantress maintaining large coterie (6)
- 3.a. Talked of a violet fringed in pink? (9)
- b. Accommodating to reality, tamp cigar out (9)
- c. Waste time around one coffeepot during working hours, mostly (9)
- d. Trickiness of cinematic 007 about drip (9)
- 4.a. Family doc eats alternative trail mix (4)
- b. Contest involving California's primary fault (4)
- c. Ace seen in top set (4)
- d. Put a restraint over the mouth of a lunatic (4)
- 5.a. Soft material's fallen loosely around queen's back (7)
- b. Disregard gender in name chosen (7)
- c. Marine distributed cocaine (7)
- d. The second President's wife is a huge pain (7)
- 6.a. Not even subjected to teasing (6)
- b. Misguide Twiggy about hairstyle (4,2)
- c. Macintosh maker touting initially small program (6)
- d. Electric guitar effect always found in R&B (6)
- 7.a. Former senator consuming cold Italian sweet (5)
- b. Song of praise disturbed an ape (5)
- c. Be derisive of failure dogging science (5)
- d. Freight carried at the outset by Jason's ship (5)
- 8.a. Kerosene only provides some lighting (4)
- b. Secure box with last piece of cord (4)
- c. Puppet put in hock (4)
- d. Flimsy article clipped (4)
- 9.a. Heard regime come down (4)
- b. Smoked salmon eggs served after noon (4)
- c. Crudely paint name around west end of alley (4)
- d. Seabird's pirouette in the Sound (4)

Note: The instructions above are for this month's puzzle only. It is assumed that you know how to decipher clues. For a complete introduction to clue-solving, send an addressed, stamped long envelope to The Atlantic Puzzler, 77 North Washington Street, Boston, Mass. 02114.

WORD COURT

by Barbara Wallraff

A week or so ago I saw this expression in the on-line edition of the Chicago Tribune: "She is friends with the mayor's wife." I couldn't believe my eyes. In fact, when I went to look up the citation in print to send it to you, it had been changed to "She is a good friend of . . ." Did "The World's Greatest Newspaper" get it wrong in the first place, or did it fix something that wasn't broken?



Joe Madden
Hinsdale, Ill.

For purposes of looking into word histories, surely the *Oxford English Dictionary* is the World's Greatest Dictionary, and it contains citations for forms of *be friends with* that date back as far as Shakespeare: "I am good Friends with my Father" is in *Henry IV*. The revised edition of the *OED*, now in progress, will have a lot more on this issue; unfortunately, the new scholarship about *friend* that Oxford's lexicographers have been amassing won't be publicly available for quite a while.

Starting next month the first sliver of the *OED*'s updated text, consisting of about 800 revised entries and 200 new ones, will be published online (at www.oed.com), together with all the 298,000 other entries in the current edition. From then on, four times a year another sliver of updated text will appear, until the revised edition is complete, supposedly in 2010.

I asked the dictionary's principal philologist, Edmund Weiner, if he had anything to share in advance about the quirky *be friends with* idiom. Usage, he explained, seems in the sixteenth century to have slipped from *make* [someone] a friend to such less logical constructions as *hold friends with*, *make friends to*, and *be friends with*. By now most of

these except *make friends with* and *be friends with* have dropped out of use. The revised edition will demonstrate the progression in some detail, Weiner avers, though the *OED* has yet to array all the evidence, because the deadline for communicating it to the *OED*'s readership isn't exactly pressing.

Everywhere I go, I hear people saying "I wish I would have done x . . ." instead of "I wish I had," or "If I would have done x . . ." instead of "If I had." It strikes me as grammatically wrong, but I am at a loss for a technical explanation of why it is—or isn't—a mistake. I wish I had taken an English grammar course more recently than eighth grade!

Holly Nesbeitt
Athens, Greece

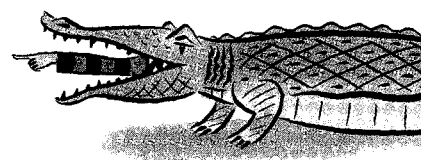
An assertion that contains *would have* is contingent on something. For instance, "I would have washed it if . . ." something else had or hadn't happened—"if I had known you were going to eat it," let's say. But how can the event on which our contingency rests be contingent as well—"if I would have known you were going to eat it"? (In your mind, strip away the *if* from that and consider what "I would have known . . ." by itself means, and the problem will be obvious.) Similarly, contingency is bound up in the very idea of a wish, as in your first example, so following *wish* with *would have* is in effect redundant: good grammar calls for "I wish I had known you were going to eat it."

I suspect that when *would have* appears in an *if* clause and the *if* clause precedes the main clause, as in your second example, the speaker or writer has made the mistake by thinking ahead to the contingent part. I've heard at

least two other explanations, though, for why this mistake is as common as it is. Possibly some people who have heard such contractions as "If I'd seen you in time, I'd have stopped you" have gotten the first 'd, which stands for *had*, garbled in their minds with the second one, which stands for *would*. Or possibly people are extrapolating from *could have*, which (because its underlying verb, *can*, behaves differently from *would*'s underlying *will*) isn't necessarily wrong in similar constructions—say, "If I could have washed it, I would have."

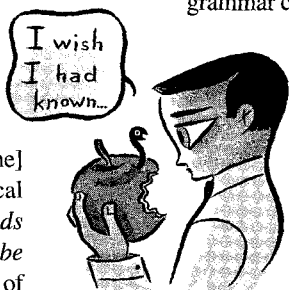
Whenever I hear a news report about some allegation having been made, I wonder whether the person making it should be referred to as an *alleger* or as an *allegator*. A person who drives is a driver, but one who conserves is a conservator, so there does not seem to be a clear rule. If *allegator* is chosen, the question of pronunciation will of course arise: should it be "*allege-ator*," as the origin of the word suggests, or "*alle-gator*," which defendants and lawyers would probably prefer?

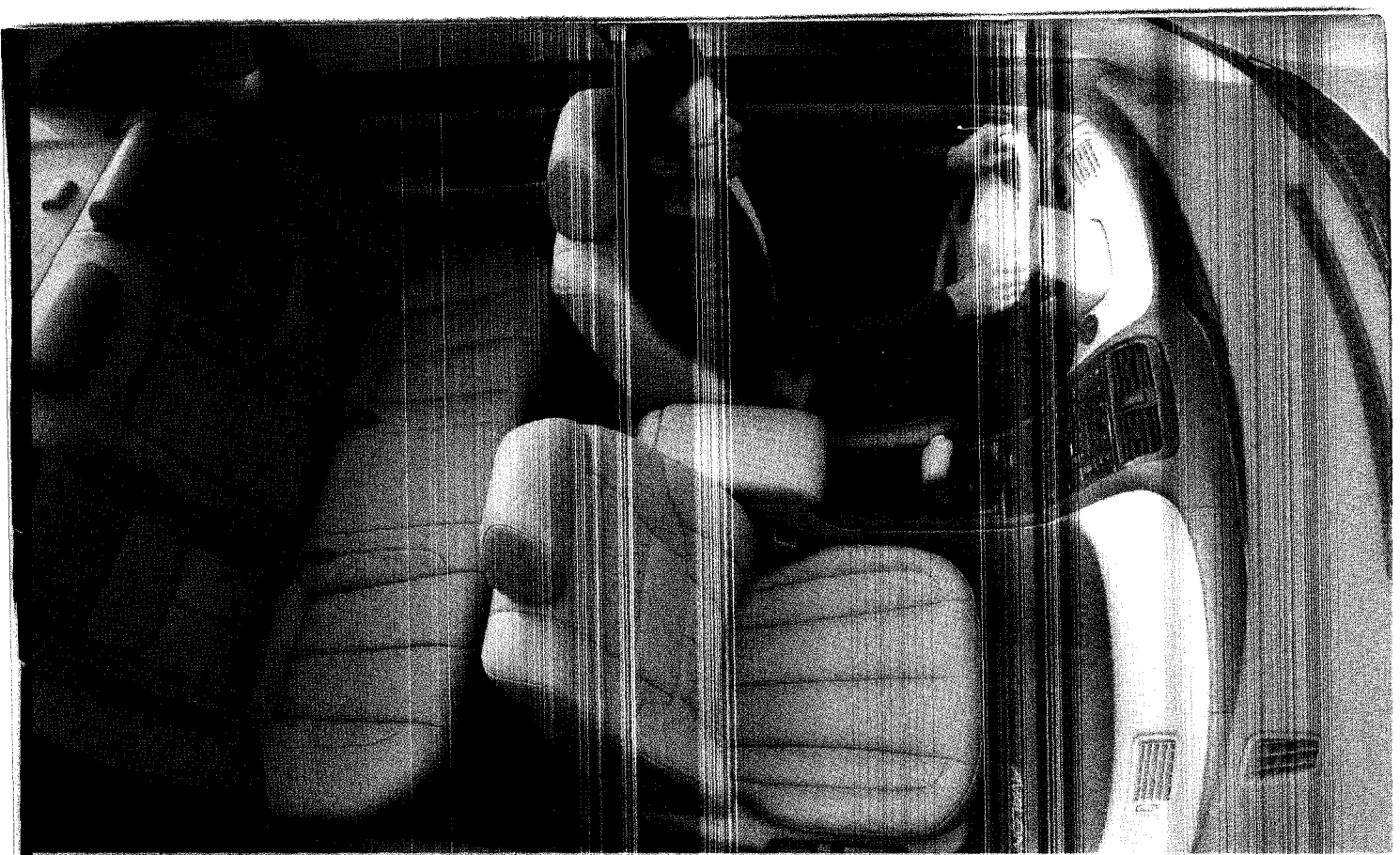
Charles M. Selby
Christmas Valley, Ore.



Both words exist, though *alleger* is more common and *allegator* doesn't seem to be gaining on it. *Allegator* joined the language together with *allegation*, as *conservator* did with *conservation*. The problem with it is exactly that it is pronounced like the fellow with the jaws and the sharp teeth. May I render a snap judgment? Go with *alleger*.

Have you recently had a language dispute that you would like this column to resolve? Write to Word Court in care of *The Atlantic Monthly*, 77 North Washington Street, Boston, MA 02114, or send e-mail to MsGrammar@theatlantic.com. All letters become the property of Word Court.



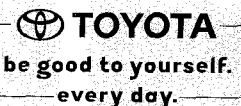


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